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The Art of Good Living.

HOW necessary it is that our modern hotels should be exponents of the true art of living! The St. Denis is a practical exemplification of this great principle, for here one can find not only the choicest viands the market affords, but also prepared and served in the most tempting and delicious manner.

Its enlargement during the past two years by a commodious and handsome addition, in which no pains and expense were spared, is evidence of the growing popularity of this well-known house. In its appointments, decorations, and modern equipments it is *par excellence* one of the leading hotels of the metropolis, while the service and attendance are most admirable in every detail and particular.

THE ST. DENIS HOTEL,

Broadway and Eleventh St.,

NEW YORK.

OPPOSITE GRACE CHURCH.

The scrupulous way in which Providence divides the blessings of life is freshly illustrated in this vivid sketch, made for ROMANCE by Rhodes Macknight.

NOT FEASIBLE.

It was one of those days which come benign after fickle weather, and which make a New York May a delight and an inspiration. The Avenue was alive. Upon the side-walks was the well-dressed throng that is without a break between the Worth monument and the circular sweep of the Plaza; in the roadway the crush was even greater.

The progress of Mrs. Kemyss, driving the piebald cobs to the phaeton, was perforce slow. But she was the more admired. Men turned to look at her from the curb; women in carriages, who knew her by sight and would have given their ears to know her more intimately, craned necks at her and could not hide the flicker of envy that shone in their eyes. She was envied because she was rich and beautiful and the widow of a great name.

If the day were perfect below in the Avenue walled with brownstone, the first glimpse of the Park promised even more. The trees were budding into tender, yellowish green, and there was the odor of springing sap and damp, fresh-turned earth and blossoming shrubs.

The ponies now were given more head, and presently, the Plaza crossed, the phaeton was rolling up the driveway between and beneath the greening trees. From the opposite direction there was an occasional vehicle, but at this fashionable hour the tide was northward. The paths skirting the road were filled with nursemaids and children; here and there was a gray-coated policeman, the custodian of dyed mustaches and the dignity of the law. On one side came a glimpse of a little muddy pond, then a broad smooth meadow of intense green, again an upright mass of gray rock embroidered with creepers.

Mrs. Kemyss had her eyes straight before her; she had no thought of these things. She did not expect to see any one in particular, and the glance she sometimes gave to some one passing was purely casual. But as she pulled the ponies' heads to the right at the broad sweep where the driveway forks at the Mall, the look she gave a carriage called for a second. Then she bowed; and when once more her eyes were before her, a tinge of red was in her cheeks.

In that carriage sat a young woman of great beauty. Yet it was not so much at the woman that she looked as at a child upon either side of her—a fair-haired boy, and a girl like her in miniature. She knew the woman to be Mrs. Minturn Appleby—she had met her two or three times—and she guessed the boy and girl to be her children. She had heard how beautiful they were.

With the flush she was deep in thought; and it was of a time fifteen years past that she was thinking. She was barely more than twenty then; but young as she was, she had had her own views of life. She was beautiful, and she was ambitious.

That night—the night up the Sound—when young Appleby had walked with her the *Norah's* deck in the moonlight, she had been pretty sure of what was to come. She had tried hard enough to prevent it. But he was such a headlong youth—such a man for knowing what he wanted, so determined to have it when he did! He had proposed, and she had declined. That was a thing of everyday occurrence, and she could never understand why he had made such a fuss about it. But the black look he had given her!—and what he had said! He had accused her, she remembered, of being a coquette. Well, lots of men, before and since, had said that to girls and they didn't mean much, after all. But she had not coquetted with him: she had liked him too well for that—and herself too well.

The next morning the *Norah* had run in to New London, and Appleby had had himself pulled ashore, bag and baggage, before anybody was up. He had left some easy message for his host, the owner of the yacht,

and he had left a note for herself. The words of that note she could readily recall, even now: "Pardon for my hasty jumping at conclusions, for my hasty words, for my hasty departure, for my hasty forgiveness." That was all—all but what was between the lines; and he had probably studied how to say it. She had laughed annoyedly.

After that she had not heard of him directly for several years. She knew, from what was known by friends, that he was working frenziedly and tenaciously at the law, that he was spoken of frequently as a "rising man," and she had been glad to see how sensibly he took his disappointment. Glad, but, being a woman, perhaps not wholly with satisfaction. Then she had married and spent a term of years abroad.

Her husband had been her choice. She had been ambitious, but she had not had time to regret. She had been blamed by some, she knew, for marrying an old man; and upon more occasions than one she had been conscious of lorgnettes levelled at her critically. When she had become a widow, however, still comparatively young, still handsome, with power and position and wealth, all that had ceased.

She had returned to New York to find Appleby a light at the bar, a man risen, a husband and father. She had seen him and his wife together several times, but he had bowed coldly. The wife she had met at receptions also. Now she had seen his children, and . . .

She had come abreast of the reservoirs without noticing how deep her thoughts had been, and she dropped the lash upon the ponies' backs with a little awakening start. This part of the Park was quieter; the pathways were almost deserted, and many of the carriages had turned back. All was green and silent and rustic; a gardener was setting out some potted flowers, tulips and hyacinths and crocuses, in a highly ingenious parterre at one side of the road, and she noticed dreamily how he seemed to be stooping amid creeping flame.

For the return she took the West Drive; and it was not long before she had again fallen to deep thinking.

She had a firm rein upon the ponies, and her bearing was irreproachable; yet any one might have seen that her mind was absent. And if the any one had been more than a superficial observer, he might have seen also that her thoughts had brought an unequivocal look of pain to her eyes now.

The entrance at Ninety-sixth Street was passed, then Seventy-eighth, and the phaeton was bowling down the smooth macadam upon Seventy-second. At the crossing stood a policeman; but his thoughts were apparently as far away as Mrs. Kemyss's. Some fifty yards farther on a young woman was coming up a by-path, leading by the hand a chubby boy of two or three years. She did not come to the crossing, but stepped over the narrow strip of grass into the roadway. Thinking, doubtless, that she would have time to get over before the phaeton came, she started, stopped undecidedly when she saw how much nearer it was than she thought, started again, then seemed fastened to the spot. It was not until the vehicle was upon her, not until she screamed, that Mrs. Kemyss saw. She swerved the ponies to one side, and cleared the woman, but the chubby boy fell beneath their hoofs.

The second cry that came to Mrs. Kemyss chilled her. She had pulled the ponies almost to their haunches; and the next thing she knew the groom, dismounted hurriedly from the rumble, was scrambling under their bellies. She saw the woman standing aside, her frightened eyes set in a face of marble; she heard footsteps trotting over the macadam from behind; then the groom emerged again with a little bundle of topsy-turvy clothes in his arms.

A small crowd had sprung up out of the ground. She heard a street-urchin yell, "Gee! here comes de sparrer-cop," and then a gray-coated figure stood majestic beside the phaeton. All this could have occupied not more than a minute, certainly: it seemed to her an hour.

"Fwhat's dthis, leddy?—fwhat's dthis?" cried the officer, his spine stiffened with authority. But without awaiting a reply he swept the crowd back with a wave of the official arm, and advanced to the woman raptur-

ously hugging to her bosom the dusty bundle of clothes. The crowd closed in at once, and Mrs. Kemyss could not see.

"Merriam!" she cried to the groom— "Merriam!"

The man came back reluctantly, and took his place at the ponies' heads. Then she stepped to the ground and made her way forward.

"The poor child!—is he hurt?—he is not hurt?" she cried breathlessly, her own face as white as the woman's whom she now fronted.

"No'm; oh, no'm, I think not," was the tremulous answer. "He don't seem hurted—he don't seem hurted a bit, 'm. Reuby's not hurted?—is Reuby hurted?"

The child squirmed in the woman's arms to get his head around. He was only partly successful; but, looking as hard as he could from the corner of one eye, his little brows all smudged with dirt and crisscrossed with wrinkles, he declared injuredly:

"I don't like dat dere lady!"

"S-sh, darling—s-sh!" murmured the young woman; and then, to smother the derogation as well as to hide her confusion, she added, "He's jest a little mite scart, ma'am."

Mrs. Kemyss impulsively leaned forward and kissed the grimy face. The infant was taken by surprise, and his eyes got big and glaring. Instantly he drew his fist across his lips, uttered one piercing yell, then became quiet, frowning the more.

The policeman had been awaiting impatiently a chance to get his word in, and this seemed to be it. He spat for prelude.

"An' sure he might bees scart, mum," he said to the woman sympathetically, harking back to the subject with which he had to do, and ostentatiously ignoring Mrs. Kemyss.

But that lady instantly moved away with dignity, beckoning the young woman to follow. "Come, get in, and we'll drive away from the crowd," said Mrs. Kemyss rapidly as she seated herself. "I'll drive you to the entrance, or to your home. Come, get in."

The woman hesitated, glancing first at the immacu-

late drab cloth cushions, then awkwardly at the ponies; but in a moment she seemed more at ease, lifted the child in, and got in herself.

Mrs. Kemyss took up the reins and nodded to the groom. But the policeman felt that he had been cheated out of a good deal of talk. He had not many opportunities like this, it might be said in his excuse.

"Course yez knows," he remarked, drawing near and placing a foot familiarly on the step—"course yez knows 't Oi c'u'd take yez t' d' Ars'nal foor dthis rickliss drivin'. Sure. But, course, 'f th' kid's not hurrted any, ut's diff'rint." He twirled his mustaches a moment: he considered that he must have made a very favorable impression: he had been polite—he had refrained from using the official phrase "run yez in"—and he was enjoying his pose because he knew that he presented a pretty figure to the crowd behind. As a fitting finish he added, "An' Oi'm plazed t' see yez'll do th' right t'ing by dese people," and withdrew his detaining foot.

Mrs. Kemyss had listened with an angry flush, and now she cut the ponies with the whip. But they were not to be off yet, it seemed. The chubby boy had been kicking excitedly since he got into the young woman's lap, and now he bawled "Me cap!"

The cap, it appeared, had been beneath the carriage. The groom ran back for it, and restored it to its owner. It was an affair of drab felt, a stiff hemisphere, with a band of blue plush around the base, a peak in front, and an elastic for the chin. The chubby boy grasped it; the tears ready to fall suddenly were checked by the eager scrutiny which followed; then he jammed it far down on his little round head.

It was some time before Mrs. Kemyss spoke; she had not recovered instantly from her vexation; and she had thought for a little while.

"He is your child, is he not?" she asked at last, glancing at the boy, who, now that he felt his hat safely on his head again, was lost in big-eyed contemplation of the flanks before him over the dashboard. "Such a nice little fellow!" she went on. "Your only child?"

The young woman seemed confused, but presently she got out that it was her only child, and that she was a widow.

"A widow!" exclaimed Mrs. Kemyss half to herself, pensively. Unconsciously she took in at a glance the woman's poor dress, her gloveless hands, and contrasted them with the smart, yet still cheap, rig of the boy. "But then," she added presently, "a widow with a child. And has he—have you no relatives? By the way, I've forgotten your name: Mrs.—ah—what did you say it was?"

The young woman had not said, but now, after giving a quick glance, she replied:

"Mrs. Burwell, ma'am. And, no'm, I have no relations."

"Then you are really—ah—what might be called alone in the world?" The question seemed eager.

"Well, yes'm. Me and little Reuby. I have some rooms—two rooms over 'n Second Avna. I'm—I'm a saleslady. But I'm out of a position jest now."

"Ah!" Mrs. Kemyss looked at her closely for a moment, but, seeing that this embarrassed her, she sent her eyes forward again. There was no need to sound the depths of her poverty, she reflected; the thin pale face was sufficient answer. Her thoughts again kept her busy for a while, and she was only recalled by the voice of the young woman, who suggested that she and the boy be set down now; they would walk straight across town, she said.

Mrs. Kemyss started slightly, and saw that they were really nearing Fifty-ninth Street. "But I'm not going to let you off without a talk," she said. "You must come with me—you must come to my house. I'll send you home later."

A look of incredulity came upon the young woman; she started to protest, but relapsed into wondering silence. They crossed into Broadway; and for a long time now neither spoke. Under the elevated they went, and down into Long Acre Square, and finally into Thirty-ninth Street. Then Mrs. Kemyss turned to remark, with a smile, that they were nearing home.

They drew up before the pretentious house in Fifth Avenue. Mrs. Kemyss, on the right side, got out first; the young woman was about to follow—had half risen—when it was found that the boy had grasped with both hands the rein-guard before him. He had made no outcry, but his tight-shut lips proclaimed, without a murmur, that he had determined to stay where he was.

"Come, Reuby, come!" coaxed his mother in a mortified undertone.

The boy turned his head slowly, without relaxing his grasp, looked coldly at the sidewalk, then turned back again. His small fists became more compact upon the rail.

"Come, we get Reuby candy," the young woman went on in a whisper. "We get Reuby nice candy."

Once more the boy turned his head laboredly; then he glanced about helplessly, and let go his hold. The next moment, in his mother's arms, he caught sight of Mrs. Kemyss where she stood waiting, and scowled threateningly. When they had got up the stoop, the sedate butler had the door in hand.

"Come right back here, Mrs. Burwell," said Mrs. Kemyss, leading the way to the rear drawing-room. "We can be quite alone here; we can talk without interruption."

The young woman trod with an awed step as she followed with the child. At the portière she paused as if what lay beyond was too sacred for her eyes; but at last she was got inside and seated.

"Now do let the little boy down," said her hostess; "you must be so tired holding him."

The little boy, when he was let down, with great ceremony undid the elastic beneath his chin, took off the cap, and laid it carefully upon a chair. He looked down at the front of his cheap kilt, detected some stains remaining from the late mishap, and brushed them off with querulous mutterings. Tidy again, he clasped his hands behind him and strutted to a window.

"He's such a manly little fellow!" Mrs. Kemyss exclaimed in a low voice. She had been watching him as closely as the mother, almost as admiringly.

The young woman looked up; she had been for the moment forgetful of where she was, in whose presence she was. "I'm afraid you'll think he's a little fresh, ma'am," she murmured apologetically.

The boy may have heard this, for, instantly waiving the attractions of the window, he strutted back and demanded with a determined air, "W'ere's dat candy?"

"S-sh, Reuby, s-sh!" whispered the mother, reddening. But Mrs. Kemyss looked amused, and said: "Does he want candy? Dear me! I'm afraid we've none in the house. But wait a moment."

She went to the bell and pushed, and immediately the butler was at the door. While she was speaking to him, the mother essayed to protest.

"Oh, don't speak of it, pray," Mrs. Kemyss interrupted her. "The man'll be back in a jiffy. I only hope he'll bring the kind the little boy likes."

The little boy discerned something here germane to his interests. "I likes sour-balls," he said without hesitation, and looking at the lady as if challenging her to produce that peculiar confection. Then, doubtless inferring from her amused perplexity that she did not know overmuch about it, he added, "An' I likes them wot's got red stripes onto them."

"Oh, Reuby, Reuby!" That was all the mother could say in her helpless shame.

"But he's such a dear little fellow!" cried Mrs. Kemyss, stooping suddenly and gathering him to her arms before he could protest, "*such* a dear little fellow! —such a *dear* little fellow!"

Breathless and indignant, the child struggled to free himself; but he was held fast. With a sudden frantic outburst he mumbled, "Say, I'll smash ye!"

The young woman could hardly believe her ears. Burning with shame she gasped, started forward, and took him from Mrs. Kemyss' arms. Then, falling to her knees beside him, tearfully she bewailed his wickedness. But he preserved a stolid front.

A diversion was brought by the butler's timely reappearance. It was found that sour-balls formed no part of the boxful he had got; but what was there in

place of them seemed to excite sufficiently the infantile curiosity and liking. It was while the boy was deeply delving that Mrs. Kemyss begin to talk earnestly to the mother; and as she talked, her face warmed into sympathy, and she seemed to be pleading a case.

She spoke of what a boy naturally bright might expect to become, what future there was for him. She spoke of a supposititious boy, yet even the young mother could not but see at last that it was *her* boy the great lady had in mind, and, her bewilderment swept away, she sat overcome with gratitude and pride at the wondrous pictures unfolded to her view. She had never had any one talk to her like this before, she had never known any one to take interest in the child, and her mother heart expanded and throbbed, and her eyes got moist, and her lips quivered. She could hardly have believed it all—could hardly believe it now; yet this lady, with the soft glance and the tender ways—could she be saying that to her which was not sincere? She could not believe that. It must be true: the little lad was all that the great lady said—would be all that she forecast. She leaned forward, glowing and palpitating, and fondly stroked his hair.

But Mrs. Kemyss had only presented the beginning of her argument. In a little while she came to a conclusion with: "And the little fellow, Mrs. Burwell, would be all this, might do all this, if he—*if* he only had the opportunity."

The mother looked up, not catching the drift of the emphasis. Mrs. Kemyss was watching her closely, and now leaned forward.

"I think, Mrs. Burwell," she went on—"I think I can put that in your way. You are poor, and out of employment, you say. And, moreover, you are a widow. I too am a widow. But," she murmured softly, "I have never had a little boy. I was thinking of something this afternoon when that strange accident occurred—let us call it a happy accident. It seems to me in some way providential—that it should happen at that very moment, you know. And—and now I am going to ask you something." She arose and went over to the young

woman, laying a hand gently on her shoulder. "Mrs. Burwell," she said, "I'm going to ask you to let me adopt your little boy."

The mother started, and looked up at her quickly in consternation and in supplication. All the color was gone out of her face now, and when she tried to speak, her lips merely moved.

"You do not seem to wish it," resumed Mrs. Kemyss after a pause, her face falling. "Of course it is a little sudden, but I sha'n't press you to answer at once. You must think it over, certainly. And you must not forget that the little boy would not be out of your reach. You might see him constantly. I will make a place for you in my household, if you wish. It would be only—" she stopped, for she saw that the young woman was trembling violently, and that her breath was coming in little gasps. She would give her time to compose herself, she decided. So she went on gently: "You may take as long as you wish to think it over, Mrs. Burwell, of course. I can go to see you—to-morrow—next day. I'd like you to give me your address, and—wait a moment," she interrupted herself, and moved toward the bell-button. But suddenly bethinking herself, she paused: delicacy suggested that perhaps the woman would be abashed before a servant in her present agitation. "I'll get my address-book," she said, going to the doorway. "Just wait—I'll be back in an instant."

As she went up the stairs, she could still see fronting her the woman's white and terrified face; and when she passed before a mirror in her boudoir, she wondered to discover how flushed her own cheeks were. The address-book she found in a moment upon a table; she grasped it, made her way into the entry and went down.

"Now," she exclaimed, pushing the portière aside—"now if you'll——" she broke off suddenly and stared about.

The woman was gone, and the child. The candy-box was overturned, as if it had been relinquished hurriedly, and its contents were scattered. She hastened into the front room, thinking that they had wandered in there, perhaps. But it was empty also.

She crossed the room quickly and pushed at the bell. Almost instantly the decorous butler was before her.

"Stop her!" she cried—"stop her!"

The man straightened, and surprise shone through his habitual calm.

She was gazing at him. "Why don't you stop her?" she demanded. "Why do you stand there looking at me?"

"Stop her, madam?"

"Instantly! Run out quick!—she's in the street!"

The butler made a hurried movement for the front-door, and she followed in her excitement. His hand was upon the knob when she recalled herself.

"Wait," she said coldly; "you needn't mind."

"If she has stolen anything, madam," he began, and paused respectfully. Then, discerning that she was struggling with an impulse, he suggested mildly, "There would be no time to lose, madam."

"Stolen anything? But there—never mind. No, she hasn't stolen anything. You may go, Price."

She turned, re-entered the front drawing-room and moved to a window. Shrouded in its lace she looked out into the street. "No, she hasn't stolen anything," she kept repeating to herself.

She saw the steeple of a distant church, the very tip, gilded with the light of the sun already set; in a moment it had gone. She saw men coming up the Avenue from business; she saw a troop of tired but merry shop-girls pass by; she saw an omnibus, loaded until the springs were flattened to the axles, pursuing its toilsome way; she saw a belated nurse hurrying home with her charges—two mites toddling, one in arms. Then a piano-organ stopped on the opposite side of the way and rattled out a tune. The street was already growing gray in the twilight.

The gathering darkness was suddenly dispelled by the flashing of electric-lights. Then she heard her maid's voice behind her:

"Madam, it is time to dress. It's Mrs. Vallandigham's to-night, you know, madam."

Every boy should read this impressive story by Edmond About, especially translated for ROMANCE. Opinions may differ regarding the good father's deceit, but he surely meant it for the best.

THE GRAIN OF SHOT.

In my time (I mean the good time of our dear Alsace) M. Franck of Saverne was famous in the two departments as an accomplished hunter. This notary, about fifty years of age, was, indeed, the astonishment of the youngest and most dapper foresters. An indefatigable walker, a nearly infallible shot, he possessed astonishing quickness of wit, unfailing judgment, great coolness and prudence, all of which are priceless qualities for the hunt. I will not do him the injury to add that he did not hunt, like so many other magnates of the district, to sell his game to the inn-keeper of the *Soleil-d'Or*. He was not only the most loyal and the most disinterested, but also the most courteous of companions; be it at home, be it with others, he gave the honors of the deer or of the hare to the neighbor who was most in a hurry and wanted most to shoot the first, reserving it for himself to kill the game after it had been missed by others.

But among all these solid qualities, the most extraordinary in my eyes was that forever watchful prudence which seemed to have constituted him the guardian of all the lives around him. I can see him yet with us, upon the steep road to the Haberacker, on the day of the battue on which he made me kill a wild boar.

This great fellow, all uniform from head to foot, dressed in plain gray clothes, with his thick Russian leather boots, his brown felt hat and his long cravat, fastened by a pin of chased silver, ran along the outskirts of the company like a shepherd's dog which would keep thirty men under his guard. No accident was possible with him; when we encompassed the game, he placed us at well-calculated distances, each one be-

hind a tree; and as long as I live shall I remember the very polite but emphatic little gesture, unaccompanied by words, which meant: "Remain there, and upon your life do not budge from the spot, whatever may happen, as long as the sound of my hunting-horn does not call you away." When the hunt was over, he gave orders to nobody, but with his musical deep voice he said: "I think, gentlemen, that we can unload our guns." He gave the example, and each one withdrew his cartridges. This manœuvre was so natural to him that on meeting the least obstacle he executed it while walking and as by instinct.

One day at the opening of the hunt in the plain of Bischwiller, I saw him jump twenty ditches in less than an hour, without ever forgetting to put his cartridges in his box; a thing which did not prevent him from killing six partridges and two hares in the hops, the clover, and tobacco which grew between the ditches. I admired very much this presence of mind in the midst of the most exciting exercise, and his constant care for the lives of others. All my impulses led me to imitate such a perfect model, but it is not sufficient to have the will to do well; therefore did I forget myself very often. One day when we were seated on the grass, *en tête-à-tête* before a rustic breakfast which the open air and wholesome fatigue seasoned royally—

"M. Franck," said I to him, "I know that I shall never equal your skill; but I should like to become as prudent as you are. It is not an easy thing, since at my age, and with a certain experience of the chase, I am still somewhat careless of both my neighbor and myself. How many years did it take you to acquire this virtue which I so much envy you?"

He started and his eyelids drooped; but overcoming his emotion immediately, he answered: "Dear friend, my education, in the respect of which you speak, was made in one month; but never was a man put in so rough a school. May Heaven preserve you from having to buy prudence at the same price!"

While speaking, he fastened between the folds of his necktie the silver pin which he always wore when on

the chase. I feared that I had been indiscreet, and I was going to excuse myself, when he continued in a firm tone:

"Truly, that souvenir must not die with me. Perhaps the lesson which I received, and which I cannot transmit to my children, since I have none, will serve the children of other men. Everybody in Saverne is ignorant of the fact that the famous hunter, known by his monomania for ridiculous precautions, escaped only by a hair's-breadth from becoming a parricide when he was fifteen years of age. Yes, my first shot nearly cost my father's life. I had just finished my third class at the College of Strasbourg, and the good Papa Franck,—may the Lord rest his soul!—had promised me a shot-gun if I took the first prize in history. I got the prize and consequently the gun. Judge of my joy.

"'I will take you with me to Haegen,' said my father to me one day, 'where I am carrying a document to have it signed; on our return we will go and shoot a rabbit in the warren of the Haut-Barr. M. de Saint-Fare gave me the key. Take the two turnspits in the kennel.'

"I had no need to be told twice. Ah! the joyful departure! and how long the route seemed to me! With what a good heart I heaped imprecations upon the head of that peasant from Haegen who wanted a translation of every word of that document before putting his signature to it! It always seemed to me that night was going to overtake us and the hunt would be delayed until the next day. The turnspits which howled in the bottom of the dog-cart were less impatient than I was. However, matters were arranged at last, and toward five o'clock we arrived at the gate of the warren. I tied the horse to a tree, my father loaded our guns, slowly, with the care he used about everything, and the dogs were unleashed.

"My father put me on the edge of a young growth of trees, with all the usual directions to young sportsmen: to overlook the two paths, to take aim at the rabbit as soon as seen, not to fire if the dogs were close upon its heels, and particularly not to leave my place, whatever

happened, as long as he did not call me. Upon that he went away quietly, counting on my obedience, to place himself at the opposite corner, out of the reach of my gun. I stood there for a few minutes, when the dogs began to yelp, and nearly at the same moment a rabbit, which seemed to me enormous, came out on my left, not ten steps from me, and with one jump cleared the path. It had passed, the dogs had followed, and I had not had the sense to aim at it. I was conscious of my stupidity, and I resolved to say that I had seen nothing; so natural is lying to a hunter, even a new one. But the voice of the dogs startled me anew, and this poignant music, which makes the heart of the oldest sportsman beat, threw me into a kind of intoxication. The rabbit came back upon his tracks, far from me, and followed the path running straight along. I ran after it; it heard me and turned again toward its first starting-place, and I after it through the brambles, furze and heather, without losing sight of it, seeing only it. It stops; I shoulder my gun, take aim, fire and tumble it over. Before, it was gray; now, it is white, with its belly turned upward. But at the same instant I perceived my father, leaning against a tree about six steps from the little animal. I had killed the accursed rabbit at my father's feet.

"To tell the truth, my joy made me at first forget my fault. I pounced upon the victim like a young savage, and lifting it by the ears above my head, I cried: 'Papa, this is my first shot!'

"'It is not all to aim well,' answered he with a sad smile. 'One must also obey. If you had remained in your place, you would not have risked shooting me.'

"'You have not been wounded, I hope?'

"'No, no; but next time be more prudent.'

"His face appeared to me to be more pale than usual; I stooped down, and I saw some slight tears in his trousers.

"'The Lord forgive me, papa! Have I shot you? Here are some little holes.'

"'There were some there before you shot. Look at yourself; the thorns have made some for you, too.'

"It was the truth—for me at least, and my anxiety was dissipated in a moment.

"Our dogs, Waldmann and Waldine, after having sniffed the body of my rabbit, had started upon another trail, and I was waiting impatiently for my father to load the guns again.

"'Let us go home,' said he. 'We have had enough for the first day. One of these mornings we will come again, if it pleases the Lord.'

"He called the dogs, went back to our dog-cart without limping visibly, and drove me home. I remarked that he had to make an effort to get down from the cart, and that he somewhat dragged his leg.

"'Are you suffering?' said I.

"He invited me brusquely to carry the guns into the house, and I saw him go up to his room with a heavy step. My brother and my two little sisters came running from the other end of the garden; they complimented me on the result of the hunt. But I was too much worried to fully enjoy my triumph, and while playing with them in the vestibule, I kept my ears and my eyes wide open. I saw our old servant Gredel go out, and after a few minutes, Dr. Mangin, our family physician, entered, full of business, and went up stairs without noticing that we were there. He remained until supper-time, and I suppose he went away while we were seated at the table. Our mother came to sit down with us, calm and sweet as always, but her face was careworn.

"'Papa is not hungry,' said she. 'He is somewhat tired and suffers with rheumatism; but it is nothing. In three or four days he will be over it. You may go and kiss him in a little while.'

"My heart was very heavy. I ate little, and I looked sideways at my poor mother, fearing to read my condemnation in her eyes. No blame appeared upon her face, but she had no appetite either, and she seemed to wait with impatience until little Antoine (that is my brother, the president) had finished his prunes and his nuts. As soon as the napkins were folded, she went upstairs to see if everything was in order in the room;

then from the landing at the top of the stairs she called to us: 'Come up and bid your papa good-night.'

"I arrived the first of all, thanks to my long legs. My father was stretched out on his back, with three pillows under his head; but he did not seem to suffer very much. I kissed him, holding back my tears with difficulty, and I whispered in his ear:

"'Dear father, swear to me that I am not a bad son.'

"'Albert,' answered he, 'you are a good boy, and I love you with all my heart. That is all that I have to say to you.'

"The little ones came running after me and began to clamber upon his bed as they so often did in the morning in their long nightdresses.

"'Take care!' cried he. 'I have a little rheumatism to-day.'

"I alone could not believe in this sudden attack of a disease which he had never had before. I leave you to imagine whether that night appeared to me to be long. It was impossible to close my eyes without seeing my poor father's leg pierced all over with shot and so swollen that the doctor had to cut the trousers to bare it. But I was not at the end of my troubles; the following fifteen days were almost unendurable.

"One morning between eleven and twelve, I looked through the window and saw our excellent physician, followed by three gentlemen. They were middle-aged men and wore the red ribbon of the Cross of the Legion of Honor. They went straight up to my father's room, and after a visit which lasted about a quarter of an hour, they came down to the parlor to consult together. I felt not the slightest scruple about listening at the door, for it was a question not only of the repose of my conscience, but also of our dearest interests. The little that I could seize by fits and starts made my hair stand up upon my head. There was a grain of shot—shot from my gun—in the joint of my father's knee. They spoke of *phlegmon*, of *phlebite*, and these words, which I heard for the first time, became engraved in my memory as upon a steel plate.

"The learned practitioners agreed upon the gravity

of the case and upon the urgency of an operation; but none of them wanted to run the risk of performing it. The responsibility was too great and success a matter of too much uncertainty. They feared that the patient, exhausted by two weeks of suffering, would succumb under the operation. A gruff voice repeated three or four times: 'I would prefer to extract ten ammunition bullets.'

"Dr. Mangin alone insisted, adding that he would guarantee the physical and mental vigor of his patient. He became so animated that he said to them: 'I shall go and get M. Sedillot. He will be more courageous than you are.'

"After that I heard nothing more but the tumult of confused voices.

"Our physician did not come back that day, and I concluded that he had gone to get the great surgeon from Strasbourg. This seemed more likely still when the next morning, at six o'clock, my mother had us dressed, and conducted us to my father's room; he kissed us all with unwonted solemnity; then my mother put us all into a rockaway, recommending the little ones to my care.

"'My child,' said she to me, "your uncle from Hochfeld expects you for the *fête* which is to begin in three days. Do not feel anxious about your father's health; from this day he will be better and better.'

"The dear woman deceived me through pity, as my father himself had deceived me. The operation had been decided upon, it was imminent, since they sent us away. 'No more doubt,' thought I. 'It is for to-day. My place is at the house; I shall go back there. I went away therefore from Hochfeld on foot, without taking leave of anybody, and in less than three hours I walked the four leagues which separate Hochfeld from Saverne.

"I shall pass in silence the sad reflections which assailed me on the way. To repentance for my fault was joined already sorrow for the future; my mind had grown ten years older in two weeks. I knew that we were not rich. My father's office was paid for; but we still owed some money on the house. Now the office

was particularly valuable on account of my father's good reputation. What would become of my mother and of the children if we must sell everything at a sacrifice? I was a good scholar, but what is a college boy of the third class good for? What useful work is he capable of? I envied my neighbors, my poor comrades, who had learned good trades and who for a year had been earning their living.

"Instead of returning home through the principal street, I went through side streets. I crossed the river, which was low enough for me to wade it, and I thus arrived under our back windows, those which faced the garden. I was about ten yards from the house when a shriek of pain, which words cannot describe, rooted me to the spot. At that time, surgeons used neither chloroform nor ether to put their patients to sleep. They cut into the quivering flesh, and nature howled under the scalpel. I do not know how long the torture of my father lasted, nor what I suffered by *contre-coup*. When I came again to my senses, I was lying flat on my face in a large geranium-bed, with my mouth full of earth and some torn flowers in both of my hands. Everything was still around me. I rose, shook myself, and entered into the house more dead than alive. My heart almost stopped beating. At the foot of the stairs I met my poor mother.

"'Well, mamma?'

"'Reassure yourself. The operation is over, and the doctor says all is going well.'

"She then began to be astonished to see me there, to scold me for my disobedience, and to bewail my new clothes which the dust of the route, the water of the Zorn and the earth of the garden had put in a sad plight. Our dear patient slept; they hid from him the news of my return until the end of the week, for fear that he would be dissatisfied, since it was by his order that we had been sent away. He had, however, to be told the truth; mother could have no secrets from him. He wanted to see me, reassure me himself, and show me that he was much better. It was a happy moment for us all. He wept nearly as much as mother and I.

"'Dear papa,' said I to him, while wiping away his tears, 'I know all. Why have you deceived me, you who are truth itself?'

"'I am not sorry for it,' answered he. 'Sometimes, but very rârely, lying becomes a duty. If a misfortune had happened, was I to sadden all your lifetime?'

"'No matter! I feel that I shall never get over it.'

"'I will console you. First of all, we shall not leave each other until the expiration of your vacation. You shall be my body-guard. Poor child, you have suffered enough of my pain now; you should be allowed to enjoy a little of my convalescence.'

"From that day there began between us an almost brotherly intimacy which rendered him dearer to me, and made me wiser. That terrible accident had taught me prudence; my father's courage and kindness finished my education by giving me an example.

"One evening I was lamenting at his bedside, as I was wont to do, for he was cured long before I was consoled. He interrupted me, saying: 'One of us has been as thoughtless as the other. Your fault was due to your age; and I ought to have foreseen it and put myself on guard against it. My part as a teacher and a father was not to wait for a rabbit two hundred yards away from you, but to follow you and direct you, without hunting on my own account. And it is thus that I shall do next year.'

"'No,' exclaimed I with warmth. 'I shall never hunt again.'

"'You will hunt, my boy. I wish it,' said my father. 'You will hunt because hunting is an exercise admirably adapted to take numbness out of the limbs of a notary. Besides, a time will come, perhaps, when any Frenchman used to firearms will be worth four ordinary men for the defence of his country.'

"My mother could not easily be contented with the idea of having two hunters in the house. Poor woman! after sixteen years of married life she still trembled every time that papa took his game-bag and his gun.

"'Well!' said she, 'what cannot be prevented must be endured. But if Albert is to return to the chase, I

will give him a talisman which will preserve him from imprudence in the future.'

"This talisman I still have, and here it is. It is the pin which you may have remarked in my cravat. Do you see that silver dove which carries at the end of a little chain a grain of shot No. 73. Poor dear mother Franck had it chased for me by Heller, the most skilful jeweller of Strasbourg. This molecule of metal, reduced nearly to nothingness by rubbing, is the same which almost killed my father. How can a man forget himself when on every hunting-day he has such a reminder before his eyes."

Here ended M. Franck's narrative. But his story deserves as supplement a few lines more. In 1870, when fifty-seven years old, that same notary took his gun to hunt the big beast in our mountains. A few determined fellows of the country followed him, and he became the captain of the sharpshooters. In the beginning of November, all his companions were dead, wounded or sick. He, who was still robust, went to Belfort and enlistened in the tenth regiment of the line. They formed a company of scouts; he became one of them and on many occasions he proved that, according to the saying of his father, a good hunter may be worth four ordinary men for the defence of his country.

Young married couples cannot learn too early the lesson of this strong story by Rebecca Harding Davis (written for the New York *Independent*). There must be no secret between husband and wife.

ONE DAY'S WORK.

Soon after daybreak, one October morning, Judge Ferguson, after the custom of good, old-fashioned Philadelphians, set out to market. The town was asleep, the air clear and cold. The stately gray houses of Walnut Street made a long aisle before him down to the Delaware, closed in by a mist of pure daffodil brilliance; the tower of Holy Trinity church, and the leafless trees before it, rose black and solemn into the motionless golden glow. A bell on a neighboring chapel struck the Angelus. Then silence followed, and presently, it being a holy day, the chimes on some far-off church began to ring softly.

"Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,"

they said.

The Judge, who was walking with a neighbor bent on the same errand as himself, stopped speaking to her, and listened to the hymn for a minute or two. He had walked up that pavement last night, with a party of men. They all had been dining late and drinking heavily. The chill, pure air this morning, the golden mist, the faint music made him feel quite like another man. But even at forty-five the Judge was an impressible young fellow, easily moved. Anybody could read his candid, changing moods. The only significance which his companion drew from the chimes was that it was past six o'clock.

They spoke presently of a lecture which Canon Farrar had just delivered on some of the old patriarchs, in the church to which they both belonged.

"All true enough, I suppose," said the Judge, idly surveying his basket. "But the lives of those old Jews

don't touch me. Their case was not parallel with ours. The Bible tells us that a man's rewards or punishment in those days came pat on his actions. One king served God; he was rich and happy and slew the Philistines. Another served Baal; he was poor, wretched, and the Philistines slew him. There's no such quick, immutable justice for us. How often now does a man ever hear of the result of his good actions? How often do the sins of his youth rise up, like ghosts, before him? Some of the fattest, jolliest men I know ought to be torn to pieces by the furies of remorse if that old law can hold good. But they are fat and jolly."

"Oh! yes, indeed," said the lady, vaguely. It was little Mrs. Luray. She belonged to a younger generation than the Judge, and had not, like him, been drilled in the Bible history in her youth.

"Do you buy your potatoes at the wharves?" she said, hastily.

She was an active church-member; had her district to visit, and was secretary of the Mothers' Guild. But she never discussed religious questions, nor, indeed, thought about them. This free and easy talk of Baal and sins and eternal justice sounded very loose and dangerous to her. Therefore she turned the conversation to potatoes. Afterward it diverged to a new recipe for terrapin patés, which the Judge was anxious to obtain. Mrs. Luray, at breakfast that morning, remarked to her husband that "Judge Ferguson was nothing but a big, grown-up child; always excited about something, religion one minute and cookery the next." That cool little lady never had been excited in her life.

The Judge was a typical Pennsylvanian, and hence fond of good living, as became a man born in that garden of plenty. For the rest, he was stalwart, portly, with a boy's ruddy, round face, which easily relaxed into laughter; a shrewd business man, with a stout backbone of common-sense, and a habit of walking straight to whatever end he had in view. His relations with his wife and children were tender and sweet. He had waded deep, in his day, into the mire of Pennsylvania politics; but even the opposite party acknowledged

that his garments were clean. Everybody, if questioned, would acknowledge the dominant worth of the Judge; but the fact was that nobody thought at all about it. A Southerner or New Englander, with no more claim than he to honor, would be a hero—the great and good man of his State. But being a Pennsylvanian, there was nothing picturesque or dramatic in his intellect or virtues. He did not know how to pose for renown. The stainless ermine on him became a well-fitting cheviot coat.

His children bore their individual honors with much more dignity. You would not find those young lawyers or society girls coming down to the level of sharp, pushing Mrs. Luray. They were secretly ashamed of their father's boyish ways, and found it necessary to rebuke him mildly every day. George, the oldest, who had as yet only a business of petty real estate transfers, took life *au grande serieux*, and bore himself gravely as one who felt the weight of his errand into the world. But the Judge, who had a case to decide to-morrow, involving millions and the interest of a whole community, talked terrapin to Mrs. Luray, until she felt actual contempt for his puerile habits of thought.

That very morning, Miss Grace, his youngest girl, had come out of her room, in her dressing-gown, to stop him as he was setting out, basket in hand.

"Why cannot the butler do the marketing, Papa?" she said. "The first jurist in Pennsylvania poking about butchers' stalls and buying sausage by the pound! It isn't seemly!"

"Go to bed, Gracey! Don't try to teach old dogs new tricks!" he said, kissing her. "Think of your poor mother having to eat anything that Patrick would buy! I think I can get her some birds if I start early."

"He'll tramp all over the town before day to get those birds for Mamma," said Grace, as she crept into her sister's bed; "and she will probably not eat a wing of them. She does not appreciate his care of her."

"She is always gentle and kind to my father. It is admirable, I think," returned Mary, who was a calm, reasonable soul.

"Yes. But a man wants more than kindness and gentleness from his wife," retorted Gracey, who was, perhaps, more like her father than the others.

The Judge was a good deal amused by his children's efforts to make an heroic figure out of him.

"The new generation is always intolerant of the one just before it," he thought, chuckling as he shut the front door. Then he grew suddenly grave. It did not matter for the children. But his wife? Could it be his homely, old-fashioned habits, his freakish ways, that Margaret did not like? That was impossible. She was even simpler in her tastes than he. And as for following out freaks—"Why, when we were first married," he thought as he went down the street, "it was always Maggy who was most eager to go fishing or off for a day's adventures, at a minute's notice. She was full of fun, the beautiful little vagabond!" He could hardly make the little vagabond who had loved him so passionately one with the quiet, middle-aged woman who, for five years, had been "always admirably gentle and kind" to him, but icily cold.

"What in God's name can be wrong with me?" he muttered, for the thousandth time. It was an old sore in his healthy life, having, as we said, been there for five years. But it was fresh enough to enrage him with pain. "I've done all a man could to win her back," he thought.

He quickened his pace, wiping his face, on which the hot sweat broke out with a sudden fury of pain. It died out as quickly as it had come.

"Poor Maggy!" The Judge pulled himself together to look at the matter with plain common-sense, determining that he was a coarse fellow, after all, and his wife (who had always seemed to him the most gentle of all high-bred gentlewomen) had, naturally, as they grew older, perceived his coarseness more distinctly and been revolted by it.

"Well, I can get birds for her anyhow," he said, with a laugh, which had some bitterness in it.

A few moments later, Mrs. Luray overtook him, and they fell into the discussion in which he averred that a

man very seldom found any reward for his efforts to do right in this world, and as seldom met his old sins face to face, rising up against him like ghosts in his road.

"Now, there," chattered the little lady, as they approached the market, "is a negro woman I was telling Mrs. Ferguson about yesterday. I gave her your address; in fact, your wife promised to give her a bundle of cast-off clothes, poor thing! She is a most worthy object."

Mrs. Luray's "worthy objects" were well known to all her friends. Many a dollar had they lured from the Judge's pockets.

"Ah! indeed!" he said, looking about for the birds.

"Yes. Very worthy. Her husband has been paralyzed for four years, and Sarah supports them both by the mite she makes here selling herbs and the like. They had a bit of ground loaned them out near Nicetown, and, do you know, that poor woman got some darky to put up the posts for a cabin, and she has nailed on the planks herself. She's trying now to raise enough to lath and plaster it. Will you cross over? I must speak to her."

The Judge knew what all this meant, and felt in his pocket for the expected dollar as they crossed the street. The woman—an old mulatto, with a friz of gray wool and a pair of iron-bound spectacles shading her thin features—was squatted on the curbstone, surrounded by baskets of herbs, persimmons and a few "posies" of dahlias and pinks.

"She and her husband were slaves on some plantation near Norfolk, Virginia," said Mrs. Luray.

"Oh! Near Norfolk, Virginia?" repeated the Judge, uncomfortably. He had spent one summer near Norfolk, in his youth, and the recollections were—not pleasant.

"Now, Sarah!" said Mrs. Luray, in the peculiar drill-major tone which, though the kindest of women, she always used to her "objects." "What! What! Wake up, my good woman! Nodding over your produce? It's the brisk seller makes the brisk buyer."

"Yes, ma'am! Please, ma'am, I was up by three

o'clock, 'n' George was powerful bad all night. Me a-rubbin' him continual!" humbly replied Sarah, hurriedly arranging her baskets.

"Oh! very well! Only don't let it happen again! Now, how much is your sage, eh?"

"That sage is two for five. I'm sellin' it on the sheers, for a neighbor of mine. I've six bunches."

"Your profit will be seven and a half cents, then. Small gains, Judge. But Sarah and I count the pennies."

"Yes, yes!" said the Judge, drawing out his dollar as Mrs. Luray finished this introduction of her *protégée*.

"I've brought this gentleman to see you, Sarah. He's a very great man. But he's kind to the poor."

"De Lohd knows he needn't to seek furder foh de pore!" Sarah got up to drop her curtesy, and the Judge held out the dollar, while Mrs. Luray, to appear unconscious of it, hurried away to a stall hung with poultry.

It was then that the sins of his youth faced the Judge. The old mulatto stood before him, more terrible than any ghost, on the curbstone in the broad daylight. She took the money, ducking and smiling, and then suddenly peered at him under her spectacles, her face dumb with amazement.

"Cunnel Matthew Hale! De Lohd fohgiv us! Is dis you?"

"Yes, it's me."

"De Lohd sakes! Ef I eber tought it was you! An' wha's yah good lady an' de chile? What'll George say now? Cunnel Matthew Hale, as married John Griffit's daughter? Is she libin, or—no, I spec she's dead now?"

"Yes, she's dead. I cannot talk to you here. I'll——"

"You mine *me?* I was ole Phebe's Sally. Phebe, what 'longed to de Bickfords. John Griffit's forge was on de Bickford plantation, an' your wife Vuhginny!"

"Yes, yes! I'll come to your house. At—at Nicetown, did she say? I'll come this morning. Go out there and wait. Now—now. Don't stay here"—glancing around like a thief when the detective is in sight. He strode away from her into the throng of the market-

place, his heart from sheer terror pumping the blood through his body, as it had done when he was a boy, in abject fear that the lightning might strike him. The hucksters called to him; but he did not hear them. He did not know that he was in the market.

Matthew Hale? It was many years since he had heard that name. His wife, Virginia? Great God! Death was better than this.

He had a dull consciousness that Mrs. Luray was beside him, prompting him what to buy.

Any other man would have remembered that he could have lied about it, bluffed the woman and pretended that her purblind eyes had challenged the wrong man. But it did not once occur to the Judge to lie in the matter. He had never spoken anything but the truth in his life. This was true, and this negro knew it, and was going to his wife.

Mrs. Luray's shrill voice brought him to himself at last. They were walking homeward.

"I'm sure Mrs. Ferguson will like those ducks. Tell her I chose them. As for poor Sarah, she really is a great weight on my mind. It occurred to me that, if you would use your influence—there is an Aged Woman's Home. She would be permanently disposed of then, and would not be able to come into town at all. There are so many worthy objects on my hands——"

"She could not come in?" said the Judge, hoarsely.

"No. Their rules are very strict. Yet," Mrs. Luray debated thoughtfully, "the plan has its drawbacks. She would necessarily be separated from her husband; and that would be a pity."

"A pity?" Judge Ferguson smiled. He would not have been moved to pity if she had been sunk into a grave, a thousand tons of stone above her wagging tongue.

"We'll try and put her in the Aged Woman's Home, or in——"

"You're very kind, Judge. And yet it is a pity to separate her and old George. They have only a few years to live, and, really, these poor creatures have their feelings, and conjugal love——"

The Judge smiled again. "Conjugal love. Oh! yes. Where does she live in Nicetown?"

Mrs. Luray gave him the direction and hurried homeward, while the Judge turned to go up his own steps, meeting a footman at the door.

"There is hot coffee waiting for you in the library, sir," said the man. "Mrs. Ferguson begged you would drink it at once, the morning is so raw."

"Very well, Thomas." He turned into the dining-room, poured out a dram of brandy, and swallowed it. Margaret never forgot to care for him. But in old times she would have brought the coffee herself, and put the sugar in, sitting on the arm of his chair. Now she sent it by Thomas.

There was nothing morbid about John Ferguson. But, like many another strong, practical man, he needed, as much as a child, to be loved and petted and made much of in his home. For five years he had gone without it all, because his wife was tired of his boyish, undignified ways, as he thought. What if she knew of Matthew Hale!

The Judge would have been glad that morning to lie dead there in the library, if he could only go down to the grave with the respect of Margaret and his children. But now——

He went out of the house and walked for hours, out through the busy streets to the park, into the long stretches of leafless trees and dead grass.

Now the fact was that the Judge, as Matthew Hale, had not been a criminal. He had sowed his wild oats at seventeen, by running away from home and joining a troupe of "barn-stormers" under an assumed name. In Norfolk he fell in love with a blacksmith's daughter, and married her. She was silly and vulgar, and when she and her child both died within the year, he bore the blow philosophically. When he asked Margaret Fleming to be his wife, this stormy episode of his youth seemed so like a disgraceful, long-forgotten dream, that he resolved to keep it a secret from her.

He knew her well enough now to know she never would forgive the blot on his life, and still less the secrecy.

About nine o'clock he came back to the city and took a train to Nicetown. He was quite resolved now on his course. The negro could not be trusted in any Aged Woman's Home within reach of gossippy Mrs. Luray. A line from him to a couple of young physicians that he knew would find a place for her in the Insane Asylum at Norristown, which harbored so many crazy paupers. If she told her story there, it would be reckoned a part of her madness. As for her husband, he should not want. He felt that at last he saw a way out of his trouble.

He found Sarah's house easily. It was a miserable shanty, even worse than he expected to see. The nipping wind drove through the wide cracks in the wall. But it was not squalid. The floor and doorsteps were white with much scrubbing, and the woman's old calico dress, though patched with twenty colors, was clean. The Judge entered the hut in a strained state of excitement, with the one idea that possessed him; but the chill poverty of the place touched him, and for the moment took his thoughts from himself. A little fire burned on the hearth; the old man was placed directly in front of it, wrapped in all the coats and blankets in the house, and his wife's shawl. She, in her thin gown, worked outside, shivering with the cold. She gave the Judge an eager welcome, and even the old man looked up with a twinkle in his bleared eyes, putting his palsied hand up to his forehead, mumbling.

Sarah stooped to listen, anxiously. "He says it's a great honnah, suh. Ef George was himself, suh, nobody kin 'spress himself more perspicuitly. I tole him you was a-comin'. I knowed you'd be shuah to come. I tought you'd like to talk wid some as hed knowed Vuhgin—yoh good lady." She brought forward a rickety chair, and the Judge sank into it. He stared at the woman, to whom he was expected to talk of Virginia and her child.

But, in fact, he and his concerns did not much interest Sarah. Like the rest of the world, she much preferred to talk of her own affairs, and lost no time in beginning.

"It's a long way out hyah, Cunnel, an' it was mons'ous kyind of you to come. I'll tell yoh good lady so when I go to see her. Mis' Luray gib me her 'dress. Yes. It's a long way; it's offle lonesome place hyah. *I* doan mind it; but it's tahble lonesome foh pore George when I'm gone. I doan spec' I mentioned to yoh 'bout George. He's an offle sufferer. Jes show de gemman yoh legs! Look at dar, suh," clicking her tongue with pity, beyond words. "Swelled up to dat! An' George, when he was young, de fohmost 'ostler at Majah Bickford's. Spry's a yearlin' colt! 'N he got a head on him, too! When de teacheh come, after de wah, George was fus' on de spellin' book, suh. Me, a was nowhahs!" laughing. "'N now he a wreck, mine 'n body. Nobody to keer foh him but de ole 'oman."

"Well, you take good care of him, I suppose?" said the Judge, for lack of something to say.

Old George mumbled again, and Sarah eagerly bent to listen; but when she heard, did not speak.

"What does he say?"

She hesitated. "'Twas kind of private 'tween him 'n me," she said, abruptly. "He said as a'd been mortal good to him." She adjusted the old rags about his shoulders tenderly. Some expression which glowed through her withered face as she did it moved the Judge.

"Old and black and a slave—a woman's a woman still," he thought, and, stooping, began to slowly fling some chips of wood on the fire, while he looked thoughtfully at the old couple. Nothing could be easier than to dispose of them before nightfall. There was the almshouse for this old man (where, really, he belonged), and, once at Norristown, Sarah's tongue was silenced forever.

"I could live out the few years left me with at least the respect of my wife then," he thought.

Sarah, with the hospitality of a Virginian, brought out a big red apple, washed it, and put it wet and shining on a clean plate with a knife before the Judge, smiling and bobbing, while the old man, peering out from his wraps, blinked and nodded with pleasure.

John Ferguson pushed the plate away. A plotter, for the first time in his clean, downright life, he tried to scowl malignantly at the old creatures, tried to force a malignant scowl into his heart.

But he failed.

"My God! I'll not do it!" he muttered, standing up. "Come what may——"

"Why yes, I'll take your apple," he said, heartily, after a moment. "It's very good; a Rambo, eh? Very good! Well, I'm glad to have seen you in your home, Sarah. You're a good wife. I'll see what we can do to make the house a little more shipshape," looking about him. "Some plastering and paint and paper, eh! and a bigger fire. We must keep George warm and comfortable. I'll not forget it."

George made a desperate effort to get off of his chair, mumbling loudly, and Sarah followed the Judge to the door, the tears in her eyes. She was stunned into silence by the sudden splendors opening before her.

"Paint 'n paper! 'N *paper!*" she said, under her breath, forgetting to courtesy and bob until he had gone down the lane, when she hastily began and kept it up until he was out of sight.

Mrs. Ferguson was alone in her own room that afternoon, when she heard her husband's foot on the stairs. She was sewing on a dress for her married daughter's baby. It was only natural that she should care for the child; but there was always a kind of impatience, an anxious haste in her love for it, as if she hoped to find something in it which her life still lacked; which her own children and husband had not given her. She was a small woman, with a peculiar, sensitive face; a singularly quiet woman as far as talking went. But there was something in her eyes which showed that the live creature within was not quiet, nor satisfied with its position. Her daughter's faces were covered with a thick ivory skin, which somehow indicated their calm self-poise; but the color went and came on Mrs. Ferguson's thin cheeks unceasingly. It rose and faded now as she heard the Judge coming up the stairs, and she

moved her foot nervously. But she looked up, calmly, smiling when he came in.

"Ah! Is it you? I have not seen you before to-day."

"I had business out of town, Mrs. Ferguson." The Judge always gave her the conventional title, which she preferred of late years, with an inward groan. He stood uncertain by the fire a moment, warming his hands.

"Margaret."

Something in his voice startled her. Her work fell on her lap; she turned to him.

"Will you come and take a drive with me? I have something to say to you alone; and—I want to show you something."

"Very well."

She put on her bonnet and wraps quickly, her hands trembling a little as she tied the strings. The Judge's old-fashioned buggy was at the door, and he helped her into it. They both remembered, perhaps, how he had bought the clumsy old thing with the fee of his first large case, and what a triumph it was, and how often they had driven through the quiet roads in the country, with the children heaped on their laps, scrambling, and singing and laughing together. Different drives from the state progress now with coachman and footman to keep guard!

They did not speak to each other while they drove through the city. Mrs. Ferguson had fallen into a habit of silence of late years, and the Judge was in no mood to make talk.

At last they turned into a quiet lane which led between some of the rich pasture farms of Delaware County. The sky was covered with low, driving clouds, the sun bursting out cheerfully, now and then, lighting up the stubble fields into slopes of shining bronze; the leafless woods rose an airy, black tracery against the horizon; here and there a maple tree flamed out a golden light, or the Virginia creeper covered the fences with a blaze of crimson. But, apart from these sudden flashes, the day was sad and sombre; as if it waited, John Ferguson fancied, for some fatal word that should be spoken.

He looked anxiously forward, from time to time, to the spire of a little country church that stood between the hills in a lonely place.

"What is it?" said his wife, who was watching him.

"There is something that I must show you, yonder."

He glanced down sideways at her face, which was unnaturally quiet, as if she had put on a mask. He knew that, when she had heard what he had to say, it would wear that look to him always. He would be done with "Margaret" forever. He ought to be thankful if she would then even keep up the decent appearance of civility before the world. But now—if she would only speak to him, and laugh once, like the old Maggy. But once—before she heard! He watched her. But her face was quiet as if cut out of stone.

They reached the stile leading to the church. He stopped, fastened the horse, and helped her to alight. A bit of woods lay between them and the church-yard. She passed through it hastily before him, the dead leaves crinkling under her feet. He took her hand as it hung by her side; but it was icy cold, and dropped out of his as passive as if she were dead.

When they came to the little gate of the church-yard, he stopped her. There were a few bare trees inside; below them, the graves covered with the brown leaves. Over some of the marble headstones and monuments a vine, with scarlet stem and leaves, climbed. A squirrel darted along the fence and up the trunk of a neighboring oak.

"Wait a moment, Margaret!" Now that the time had come, the honest old fellow blundered into his story in his usual stupid, commonplace fashion. "There is a woman lying yonder, under that haw-bush. I wanted to tell you about her, beside her grave, so that you may believe every word I say. I couldn't lie to you about her, you know, beside her grave."

It may have been only a womanly impulse of kindness toward a human soul in dire straits, but she suddenly took his hand and held it between hers, looking breathlessly into his eyes.

"You could not lie to me anywhere, John," she said.

"Well, I thought of doing it. That is, there was a woman who would have told you the truth, and I thought of removing her, so as to hide it. But it would have been cruel—damnable. So I brought you here to have it out."

"Go on."

"It is something I should have told you before I married you. But I was a coward. Now—come."

He pushed the gate back, and hurried her across the little field to a grave in a corner. The bushes had grown across the headstone. He kneeled, and pushed them aside with shaking hands.

"Do you see?"

Her eyes were on his face, not on the graven words.

"Can't you see? 'Virginia Ferguson, aged twenty.' She was my wife."

"I know it, John."

He staggered to his feet. "You,—how long have you known it?"

"For five years. Your brother told me the whole story."

They stood facing each other, silent.

The Judge at last cleared his throat, and straightened himself with an odd feeling that he had gotten down into death, and must pull himself up to life again.

"It was Virginia that has come between us, then, all these years? If you had known her, Margaret, you would have known you had no cause for jealousy."

"It was not Virginia." She caught his arms, looking up passionately into his face. "It was secrecy. It was the hiding it from me! I was not your wife when this thing lay covered between us. You've told me now. It's all over. John! John!"

All over! The Judge caught his wife by the hand; then he paused, and led her gently away.

He could not tell her how dear she was to him, and what it had cost him to lose her all these years, beside the grave of this other woman, who had not been dear, and whose loss had been a relief to him.

They walked out to the porch of the church. The sun shone warmly as they stood together.

"Is it all over? These last years have been hard on me," he said.

It was the old face that was turned to him, the old look that he had not seen for years.

"Maggy!"

She drew him down to her and kissed him.

"Between us there shall be no more secrets," she said.

The Judge did not answer, but he bared his head and stood for a moment silent looking out into the far sunshine.

From so undemonstrative a man the action meant much.

They drove home together in the darkening evening. The streets of the city were beginning to glimmer with countless lamps, as they entered it, and there was the thoughtful hush in the air that succeeds the day's noise and tumult.

A soft after-glow lighted the western sky as they neared their home, and from the far-off chimes of St. Stephen's sounded again the refrain which began the day:

"Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,"

"It has led me!" the Judge said to himself.

Gracey was watching for them. "Why, how radiant you both look!" she said, as she kissed them. "You might be young folks coming home from your wedding journey!"

Her mother kissed her again, but said nothing.

A truly Christ-like revenge is described in this affecting tale from the German of J. Esler, rendered into English for ROMANCE by Lucia Olcott Streeter.

THE ANT-HUNTER.

A DELICIOUS freshness pervaded the woods. The sparrows flitted in and out among the branches, and sang to one another their sweetest songs. On a projecting bough a finch had comfortably settled himself, and was whistling with the utmost nonchalance the sole number contained in the poor rascal's repertoire.

It was a rare delight indeed, to wander through this natural loveliness, after leaving, scarcely two hours before, the stifling atmosphere of a railway-car; and the pathway, through which I loitered in happiest mood, was a narrow one. The highway, indeed, would have conducted me more quickly to the desired haven, but on this most magnificent summer day I very naturally chose the longer walk through one of the most beautiful bits of forest in the neighborhood.

Suddenly the sunshine glinted more brightly through the trees. It must be that I was approaching a clearing, and, in truth, a few more steps brought me to an open place, which spread itself out like an island in the heart of the wood. Near the edge of the clearing knelt a man who was industriously filling a sack. Could it be earth that he was scooping up—and for what purpose?

I stole nearer. That which the man was gathering was the peculiar nest of the wood-ant, cunningly put together from bits of plants and pine-needles. All this the man put into a wire sieve, through which the ants and their white larvæ fell into the sack.

"Good success?" said I with friendly greeting.

The ant-hunter looked up, and pushed back a little his old felt hat. Then he said: "It will do, sir. There isn't anybody in the neighborhood who cares to be a rival in the business."

"Indeed! has any one any objection to it?"

"Hm! yes. The work makes one look so!" said the ant-hunter, and his eye ran over his own shabby exterior.

He wore a dirty and ragged brown coat, was barefooted, and pressed upon his frowzy head was a crumpled hat of doubtful color. Between his teeth he held a short pipe, the rudely fantastic head of which he might have carved himself. The old stump must have been the dearest thing he called his own, for even when he spoke, it did not leave his lips.

I had never before seen an ant-hunter, although he is a characteristic feature of the Alps, so I sat down upon the stump of a tree to watch him at his work.

"You won't see anything very remarkable," said he, shaking the sieve. "My work is simple enough."

He spread out a linen cloth, fastened down its four corners with wooden pins, and surrounded the whole with pine-branches. Then he took the sack and shook its contents out upon the cloth. Immediately the lively little creatures seized their babies, and sought to hide them among the sheltering twigs. Thereupon the ant-hunter carefully brushed these twigs with a coarse rag, and the ants remained hanging to the twigs, while the larvæ lay clearly distinguishable upon the cloth spread out below.

"My crop is gathered for to-day," said he, thrusting his booty into the sack.

"And does this business make you a living?" I asked.

"Oh! it'll do. The dealers pay me pretty well, and the amount I need for my living—" He did not finish the sentence, but a sad smile flitted over his face.

While his work had been going on, his pipe had gone out, and he drew out now a closely-tied tobacco-pouch. It was empty. I could see that the old man was greatly disappointed, and that after his hard work he had counted upon this modest enjoyment. Help, however, was at hand; for although no smoker myself, I always carry tobacco with me on these mountain excursions. It is an "open sesame" when even the jingle of coin is ineffectual—no Alpine shepherd can resist it. Such a

packet I took from my pocket now, and opening it, offered it to the ant-hunter.

"Here is some. Try it, and see if it suits you."

What had I done! The man stood as though transfixed, his eyes staring. A shudder ran through his body.

"Sir!" he burst forth, but excitement would not let him proceed further.

"Take it! I beg of you," said I.

Upon this, a curious change came over his countenance. A suspicious moisture appeared in his eyes. His bosom rose and fell, and involuntarily he stretched out his hand for the little packet.

"Sir," he faltered, "sir, excuse me! but it is fully twelve years since a human being has offered me a kindness."

"You—avoid people?" said I, perplexed.

"Or they me—which amounts to the same thing," said he bitterly.

I looked narrowly at him. He dropped his eyes.

"But they are right!" he went on, as if talking to himself. "It is indeed a disgrace to associate with a jail-bird!"

He stopped as though he expected me to order him off. He waited in vain, however—for, though astounded at his disclosure, I said not a word.

"Whether one became such through his own desert, or if he be really a bad man, no one ever takes the trouble to ask. It is enough that he has worn the striped jacket; he must be a rascal."

"You have really experienced this yourself?" I asked.

"What! I? Do you really think so, sir? Ha, ha, ha!" His laugh was forced and shrill. Suddenly his manner changed.

"Forgive me, sir!" said he with surprising quietness. "The miserable business belongs to years gone by. I never like to stir it up. But as you have been so kind, I would not have you get a wrong impression of me—so listen, and despise me if you can."

He packed up his implements, threw his sack over his shoulder, and started on his way.

"I'm bound for S.," said I. "Are you going the same way?"

"The same, sir, whichever way you go. I am everywhere—or rather, nowhere—at home."

We walked on, and soon entered again the magnificent wood. But its beauty found me indifferent now. I was all absorbed in the mysterious man at my side, whose eyes were fixed intently upon the mossy earth.

"You were going to tell me your story," said I, taking up the conversation where we had left off.

"I was going to—yes. But really, now, I'm almost sorry I said so. However, I promised, and I must keep my word—for, somehow, you're different from the rest."

He struck a match and lighted his pipe, which he had already filled with my tobacco.

"One would never think, to look at me now," said he, after a few pulls at his pipe, "that I was the son of a rich farmer. Ah! truly, time can do strange things with men. My father—blessed be his memory!—was wrong when he so often said, nearly thirty years ago, that his wild boy wouldn't live to see many years. I've seen only too many of them!

"There was my brother Xavier—an entirely different sort of fellow—my exact opposite. While I wandered the whole day long in the woods, he would sit poring over books thick with dust even in our grandfathers' day, which he found in the garret.

"In the catechism he stood at the head. The pastor had not met so industrious a boy in years.

"And I? Oh! I was a good-for-nothing, who deserved a whipping every day. I got it often enough too, and it didn't agree so badly with me either, for I grew to be such a big fellow as couldn't be matched in the neighborhood.

"I think for one while there wasn't a village fair in the vicinity where I didn't play the rowdy. This would have been a pretty bad state of affairs if it had lasted long, but an end soon came to it—an end which I would gladly have exchanged for an honest stab in a tavern brawl. It happened thus:

"Can you see, sir, that old tumble-down hut over

there, between those two larches? Twelve years ago that was the home of an old day-laborer. It is easy to be seen that wealth had no place there; but the house was kept by Marie, the old man's daughter—a girl so pretty that the angels in heaven might have rejoiced to look at her. What wonder was it that I often stopped to chat with her over the fence, or fasten a nosegay in her bodice, on my way home?

"Well! the summer passed away; and when winter came on, raw and cold, and I had no excuse for wandering among the mountains, still something drew me irresistibly to those old paths, and I could not let a single day go by without seeing Marie.

"Her father saw how matters were going, but he made no objections; for while he knew that I was a wild sort of a scamp, he did not believe there was anything really bad in me. And he was not mistaken.

"The time came at last when I must acquaint my father with the state of affairs. Oh! but you should have seen, sir, the storm it raised! It had never entered into my lovesick brain that Marie was the daughter of a poor peasant! The old man was stubborn, and I equally so. For six whole weeks, I did not sit down to a meal with him. Xavier, in the mean while, was all devotion. And he was right—my noble brother!—for was I not making my choice between Marie and my share of the property?

"Just then it seemed as if Heaven itself meant to spoil his calculations. The dreaded day for the military draft came on. I had the year before drawn the lucky number which exonerated me from service. It was now Xavier's turn to try the wheel of Fortune.

"He drew a blank—and unless a substitute should be provided, he must within a few days join the army.

"My father was inconsolable. A substitute was no easy thing to obtain, especially as the very air seemed full of ominous portents, and any day might come the news that war had been declared.

"A thought flashed through my mind. I swallowed my pride on the instant, and once more entered the old man's presence.

"'Father,' said I, 'if you will give your consent to my marriage with Marie, I will be Xavier's substitute.'

"Three days later, I was wearing the Kaiser's green uniform."

The ant-hunter stopped for an instant, and looked about him.

"It is a beautiful little bit of earth—this fatherland," he went on to say, "and I have always loved it. My grandfather gave his life for it. He was killed in the year 1809 in a battle with the French. He little dreamed, good man, that a grandson of his would cover his untarnished name with disgrace, and, shut up in a fortress as a cowardly betrayer of his prince, curse the day that ever he was born!

"And can you imagine, sir, who brought me there? A miserable rascal! the offscouring of humanity!—may the earth swallow him up, and God curse him! By heaven! I was not bad, but they were bound to have me so, and the one who can most congratulate himself on his success is no other than Xavier. My precious brother Xavier!

"It was not enough that he had robbed me of my father's heart; he must take from me that for which I had sacrificed my freedom.

"Through what deviltry he managed it I could never find out. Suffice it to say, I had been scarcely six months in the army, when a fellow from my native village did me the friendly service to tell me that Xavier and Marie had been called out three times from the altar.

"At first, I only ridiculed the idea, but later I was convinced that it was only too true.

"Do you see that blade of grass there, sir? Whichever way the wind blows strongest, that way it blows—a picture of a woman's heart! From that day I lost my faith in humanity.

"Oh, but it was a fearful blow to me! I thought I was going to lose my mind. Only one thing seemed plain to me. I must see the miserable pair, and avenge myself.

"The day on which they were to be married, I was on my way home. I had asked for no furlough, I had

thought of none. All unwittingly I had become a deserter.

"At last I was within sight of my goal. Already I could hear the church-bells ringing, and shuddered at their tones. They were the funeral-knell of my fool's happiness. Oh, how I longed for wings! Perhaps I could get there yet, and stop this horrible thing, and then— But no! strength failed me. My limbs were like lead, and only with difficulty could I drag myself along.

"When I reached the church, I was too late. The bridal procession was just coming out. I can see them now as if it had happened only yesterday. Oh! that a thunderbolt had fallen from heaven and transfixed them all! But ah! no. The sun up there shone brighter than ever, the birds sang in the great linden trees, and underneath them the village musicians struck up a lively waltz.

"It was as if everything had conspired together to mock me. I could bear it no longer. In a rage, I picked up a stone from the road and dashed toward Xavier. One shriek, then another—and then all was still."

"You killed him?" said I, horrified.

"Killed him?—A fortnight later I found myself imprisoned in a fortress. To-day, by particular favor of the Kaiser, I am again free—a ragged ant-hunter. And Xavier?—Do you see, sir, that big house over there? It is the finest in the neighborhood. There my brother lives with his wife and several children. Behold the righteous reward which Heaven metes out! 'Vengeance is His,' our pastor would tell us. Can one be surprised that I have lost my faith?"

The ant-hunter pressed his hat low upon his forehead, gruffly bade me good-by, then struck into the path among the bushes on our left which led over a stony hillside to an isolated farmhouse, where he hoped, without doubt, to dispose of his curious wares.

Lost in thought, I picked my way along the rough path to the village, whose church steeples were reflected in every direction by the glowing rays of the sun, which in its setting looked like a magnificent carbuncle.

Slowly and laboriously the dark shadows climbed

from the valley up the mountain. But no sweet, refreshing breeze announced the approach of evening. A sultry, oppressive heat hung over the entire region, and a black cloud, like a chariot drawn by invisible horses, came up in the farthest west as the advance-guard of a menacing storm.

S. is one of those pretty little villages which these high mountains hide by the hundred among their valleys. Its largest building, next to the church, is its tavern, which offers the friendliest of hospitality. Upon its sign is blazoned a chamois, the future ornament of the Alps—as yet, alas! a mythical creature.

As I entered the public room in my comfortable negligée, there upon the centre-table was already burning the petroleum lamp—an article now to be found in every peasant's hut. By a corner-table sat several peasants, with their beer mugs before them. I stepped past them toward an open window and looked out.

It had already grown very dark, and the whole heavens, as far as the eye could reach, were enveloped in black, dangerous-looking clouds. Every now and then there would be a bright flash on the farthest horizon where the mountain-peaks kissed the clouds, and then would come a response in low, heavy growls from unfathomable abysses.

Scarcely ten minutes later, a wild hurricane was in full blast. Heavy drops fell pattering upon the ground. Lightning flashes came thick and fast; and from the church tower pealed forth the storm-bell.

The bar-room door creaked on its hinges, and a man, bent and dripping with rain, appeared within it. Without a word, he stepped in, and retired quickly to a dark corner. It was the ant-hunter.

The landlady sat by the stove and knit. Only from time to time, as an especially blinding flash would shoot across the heavens, would she let her work fall in her lap, and make quickly the sign of the cross. She had indeed noticed the new guest, but evidently did not think him worthy of a second glance.

"A dram!" said the ant-hunter roughly. The landlady knit industriously on.

"A dram!" came more violently from the corner. That took effect. Slowly the woman got up; more leisurely than was necessary she went to the cupboard, and finally placed, with scant courtesy, the desired liquor before her guest. The latter looked at her in a curiously mocking way.

"Aren't you glad to see me?" said he. "I have the same right to sit here as the others. I pay my bills."

At the table where the peasants sat, there had been a great commotion ever since the arrival of the ant-hunter. There was much putting of heads together, very animated whispering, and an industrious passing about of the pitcher.

"Landlady!" finally cried the principal speaker of the company, a broad-shouldered, thick-set man, "the pitcher is empty. If you want to fill it again, please to notice that we're not going to sit in the same room with a jail-bird."

The ant-hunter shrank at the tones of this voice.

"Xavier!" he faltered.

The man so designated caught the word, and with flushed face, and holding his oaken stool in his hand, took a few steps forward.

"Now," said he, trembling with excitement, "there is the door!"

The ant-hunter had risen. He seemed strangely calm.

"Xavier," said he, "you are making yourself unnecessary trouble. Your scorn no longer irritates me. Once have I raised my hand against you in revenge, but I ought not to have done it. Now I am waiting until the hour itself comes."

A blinding light flooded the whole room. Then came a fearful clap. The windows rattled. With a shriek, the landlady sprang up, and all rushed to the window.

"That struck!" said the ant-hunter, and sat quietly down again.

Outside, deepest darkness reigned. In vain did we seek to pierce it. Suddenly, a column of fire mounted to heaven. The whole village was as light as day.

"O God! my farm-buildings!" cried Xavier, burying his face in his hands.

"I believe the hour is here!" said the ant-hunter, and emptied his glass.

From the towers sounded again the storm-bell. Gruesome were the shrill tones as they rang through the darkness of the night.

"Fire! Fire!" was next heard through the village, and the startled people ran hither and thither in the wildest excitement. Windows were thrown open, doors creaked on their hinges, and everybody rushed toward the wooded ridge from the foot of which a mighty pyr amid of flame rose toward the sky.

Shrieking and crying, the frightened women and children begged their husbands and fathers not to expose themselves to danger.

But their alarm was groundless. They had nothing to fear from that scene of horror. Not a finger was lifted to bring help to that stricken home. God Himself had hurled the thunderbolt, and where He kindles the fire—so it is related shudderingly from generation to generation of the peasant folk—billows of water are powerless to extinguish it.

Idly, therefore, stood hundreds of people before the finest farm-house in the valley, and gazed with impotent horror into the flames which would soon engulf it.

With dishevelled locks, and wild despair in his eyes, Xavier appeared now and then and threw out whatever came to his hand, howsoever worthless it might be.

The wretched man had lost his senses. A group of women had gathered about the well, and in their midst lay the farmer's wife, who had dropped down there utterly exhausted from fright and excitement. She had been with the children in the house when the lightning struck the adjoining barn and set it on fire. When she flew from the house, the rafters were already ablaze.

The women were bathing her head with the fresh well-water when she opened her eyes and looked anxiously about.

"Friedel, Lorie!" she cried, and, with the words, pressed the sobbing children to her breast.

"Merciful Heaven! My little Tony!" she suddenly shrieked, springing to her feet. "He lies up there in his cradle, and will be burned to death!"

Horror held the bystanders spell-bound. It was heart-rending to see the poor mother in her despair. It did not seem possible for a human being to offer help. Already the flames were bursting from the windows. Even Xavier had been forced to desist from his labors. With singed hair and clothing he appeared now in the doorway.

"My baby! My baby! Save my baby!" moaned the mother, wringing her hands.

No one stirred. Any attempt would have been foolhardy.

"Give me my child, or I shall die!" she cried again, and rushed herself toward the scorching, fiery furnace, as if to snatch her darling from its depths. Just then, a heavy hand was laid upon her shoulder, holding her back.

"Don't do that, Marie," she heard a rough voice say. "You have made me a criminal, now I will take my revenge!"

An icy chill ran through my veins at these words. It was the ant-hunter who spoke.

"Joseph! Good heavens! Would you kill my child?" cried the mother, and in her desperation she clung about his knees.

Quick as lightning the ant-hunter pushed her from him, and rushed himself into the billowing flames. A cry of horror burst from all who saw him. The unhappy man had voluntarily gone to his death. Any instant the rafters might fall in, and, if he were not suffocated with the smoke, they would bury him in their ruins.

A few breathless, horrible moments went by. Silently, all eyes were fixed upon the fire-wreathed windows; when, suddenly, there appeared at the top one a figure, holding a black object high in his hands.

"Catch it!" sounded from above. Twenty hands were stretched into the air, and caught the cradle which the ant-hunter dropped down to them.

A low whimpering issued from it.

"He lives!" were the joyful words that rang from the heart of the mother.

"He lives!" fell with a hollow sound from the window above; and the whole house, with a fearful crack and tumble, seemed to repeat the words.

The handsome farm-house disappeared as if by magic, and in its place a charred ruin yawned horribly.

"Joseph!" shrieked the farmer's wife, bethinking herself of the rescuer of her child.

All was still.

"He is avenged!" said I half aloud, and turned away to hide my tears.

Henry Willard French has written for ROMANCE this exciting tale of Asiatic adventure.

A HINDOO'S LOYALTY.

My servant Sajad was by no means an extraordinary fellow. I picked him up in Benares, one scorching afternoon in midsummer. I was in want of a *kitmutgar*, and he seemed to have nothing to do. He could not speak one word of English, and, to tell the truth, that was the first and only recommendation upon which I engaged him.

In religion he was a Mussulman, but he was far from being devout; indeed, I very soon rated him as rather below the average in everything. However, as I did not require anything remarkable, we got on well enough to the end; for he followed me—poor fellow—to his death.

Steal? Most decidedly. He would invariably steal anything belonging to me that attracted his fancy. If I discovered it and went about it in the right way, I could usually get it back.

Sajad never left me for an hour, from the time he entered my service. He followed me all day and slept on a rug at my door or lay on the sand at my feet or just outside my tent, at night, as the case might be, and he received just as many lectures on veracity and made just as many promises as the time allowed; but I am sure that he told me just as many lies the last week of his life as he did the first week he was with me. It is as much the nature of the Oriental to lie and steal, as it is of a dog to bark at a horse, or of a cat to help herself to cream.

One who expects too much is apt to give credit for too little. That may be the reason the Hindoo has such a bad reputation in the minds of some who mean to be just, or even generous. Many a good turn Sajad did me, right in the line of those two traits. It takes a rogue to catch a rogue, and I know that he saved me from being robbed by others many times over for all

that he took himself, while he would detect a lie in what any one else told me as quickly as a negro boy in old Virgin' would spot a ripe watermelon.

We were marching through the Terai, once, with a small detachment. A soldier was leading my horse, while I walked upon one side of the path, followed at a little distance by Sajad, hunting for a bird I had shot and which had fallen in the tall grass. Suddenly there was a cry from those behind. I looked quickly over my shoulder. A hooded cobra, disturbed by the commotion I was making, had risen out of the grass just behind me. His flat head and flaring hood were already thrown back for a final fling at me. His half-open mouth was within three feet of my face when my eyes rested upon it. If I turned, I should only expose more of my face. If I lifted a hand, he would strike it quicker than lightning. There was no chance to get away, and I was utterly helpless.

Before I had time to think a second thought, however, Sajad made one leap from where he was standing, and before his feet had touched the ground, he had brought his staff about with a sharp whirr, as it cut the air, too quick even for a snake to dodge, and the next instant the cobra's body was writhing in the grass, while his head, completely severed, fell at my feet.

Had Sajad waited an instant, he would have been too late. No one else could have reached me; yet if he had missed his aim or the snake had dodged, his own life would have paid the forfeit. No one knew it better than Sajad himself, but he took the chance and saved my life. He had in his girdle at the time a bright-colored silk handkerchief which he had stolen from me, and only that morning had solemnly declared that he knew nothing about it.

Up in the hills, one afternoon, I was lying on a low tent-bed, taking a nap, when Sajad saw a poisonous insect, a kind of scorpion, crawling over my pillow. He had nothing near to use as a weapon, and no time to lose. He caught it in his naked hand, and threw it out of the tent-door. I woke in time to see it flying through the air, and hurrying out killed it before it got away.

I called to Sajad to ask if he had escaped a sting, and receiving a cheerful reply in the affirmative, thought no more about it till, chancing to enter the tent softly and unexpectedly, I found him sucking the back of his right hand, for dear life. He stopped the instant he saw me, and put the hand behind him.

The poison had already begun to take effect. The hand and arm were swelling, and before long Sajad was lying on the floor, writhing in agony. The only antidotes I had were ammonia and whiskey. Sajad knew the contents of both bottles, for he had the care of all my traps. I did my best for him with the ammonia; but utterly in vain I pleaded, begged, commanded that he take the whiskey. He would not touch it.

Why? Only because he was a Mussulman. No matter how intense his agony or determined my command, he put his well hand over his mouth and shook his head. He felt sure that he was dying and he believed my assertion that the whiskey might save him, but that made no difference. He came so near to death that he was past seeing anything and beyond hearing. He lay upon the ground, just breathing, panting, as though he was almost at the end. It seemed useless to try again, and yet, now that he was unconscious, I could at least make a last, desperate trial with the whiskey. The moment that it touched his lips, he struggled away, clutched his lips with his hand and shook his head.

I believe the very fear that I should succeed in giving him whiskey kept him alive till the poison began to lose its power. At all events, he did not die.

Sajad was as fond of hunting as I. Many a time we two slipped away from camp in the gray of early morning. Once, just before daylight, I was out with my shot-gun in a thinly-wooded jungle, a mile from camp, upon the shore of a small lake, waiting for birds.

It was just my luck! Because I came prepared for birds, there was not one in sight, but three beautiful antelope came down to drink, within a hundred feet of us. I looked at the shot-gun in disgust; then looked again at the antelope. It was exasperating. I was determined to have a shot, at any rate, and, in the hope that

I might stun one of them or at least bewilder him for an instant, I whispered to Sajad to be ready with his knife and make a dash the moment I fired.

Cautiously I raised the gun to my shoulder and was pressing the trigger, when Sajad touched me and whispered: "Wait, sahib! Look there!"

I looked and my shot-gun fell. At a slight angle, but little more than half-way between us and the antelopes, there crouched a Royal Bengal tiger. A single glance was sufficient. He was surely a man-eater. Evidently he had been on the point of satisfying his hunger with an antelope when he caught sight of us. He was within an easy leap of the antelope, but was deliberately turning away and facing us. The motion startled the deer and they bounded off, but the tiger paid them no further attention. The huge creature opened his great jaws till his head seemed nothing but a red, yawning gullet, bordered by long, ragged, glistening teeth, and, with a savage snarl, he began to approach us.

There was no need of looking about for a place of safety. The jungle was sparsely wooded at the best, and the largest tree we had passed in coming from camp would not have borne even Sajad's weight ten feet from the ground. Sajad had only his hunting-knife, I nothing but my shot-gun.

"One of us must go, sahib," Sajad muttered, without taking his eyes from the tiger. "If we run together, we shall both go. He will overtake us in a moment. Let Allah decide as it is written in our foreheads. Run that way, for your life, sahib. I will run this way. Be quick! before he comes nearer!"

There was no time for thought. It seemed a fair proposition, and even as he spoke the Hindoo started at the top of his speed away. It was useless standing still or following him, and acting upon his suggestion I started in the opposite direction.

After running a rod or two, I looked over my shoulder. The tiger had made a leap and was just landing, already crouched for another spring. He was following me!

I will not admit that I hoped he would follow Sajad, but I did hope that he would not choose me. It amounted to the same thing.

I started on for one more desperate struggle. I was doomed. I knew it perfectly well; yet while there is life, there is hope, and I ran as I never ran before. I resolved to go as far as I could, and then whirl about and give the tiger a charge of fine shot full in the face. It might put out his eyes. There was at least that possibility to hang a desperate hope upon, and throwing my gun to my shoulder, I turned. The tiger was not there! Looking farther back, I saw his tawny hide in the underbrush. Instantly it rose. He was making a leap, but it was not toward me! One thrill of gratitude shot through my veins, when my heart stood still with horror! There was one sharp yelp as the huge form swept through the air and, crushing the leaves and branches as it fell, landed upon the prostrate figure of Sajad, silently waiting for the blow.

I stood there petrified, the cold perspiration dripping from my forehead. There was not a sound from Sajad. There was only one fierce howl from the tiger. Then all was still.

It was only an instant, but in that instant we two, my Hindoo servant and I, stood out before me in very bold relief. I had run for my life, knowing that the chances lay between us two, and hoping, at least, that the tiger might not follow me. He had run, too, knowing that the chance lay between us, and because the tiger did not follow him he had come back again and tempted him, called him away from me and given his life for mine.

He was a poor benighted heathen, and only an average sample of his kind. He could not help stealing pretty things. He could not stop telling lies. But surely he was a truer, braver, nobler man than I, and if the image of God can be found, to-day, in any of his creatures, it would require no very deep theologian to decide which of us two betrayed it, least profaned.

The Realistic Story is not necessarily sad; but the fact must be admitted that its shadows usually overbalance its lights. This will be found true in the following quiet but strenuous tale of unrequited love, written for ROMANCE, and the first in our group of three Realistic Stories. Its author, Hannah Parker Kimball, whose charming poems have already given her a high place in our literature, here shows herself also a skilful worker in prose.

HIS SISTER.

"HAS she gone?"

The motherly-looking person addressed was peering up the staircase of a farm-house at a woman in black, who leaned from the landing, her knotty hands far apart on the rail.

"Yes," she called back, and the other came slowly down.

She was tall and hard-featured; so tall that she seemed about to strike her forehead on the floor overhanging the staircase; so hard-featured that her fine, dark eyes hardly redeemed her from ugliness. To-day, moreover, her eyes were red, her whole face disfigured by weeping.

Below, the two turned into a room half-rustic, half-urban, like most parlors of well-to-do farming people in large and prosperous villages. From the ceiling hung a gilt chandelier covered with pink muslin; on the floor was a square of carpet woven into huge bouquets of roses. To-day the centre of the room was bare, and against the walls a great many chairs stood at haphazard. Some lilies dying on the mantel exhaled a close, sweet smell. From a room beyond came a "tink-tink," as of the piling up of cups and saucers after some festivity. Yet, like all rooms deserted by a company that has left it in disorder, this one seemed full of a palpable solitude.

As she sat down, the taller of the two women cast an almost frightened glance about.

"Did yer tell Abe ter hitch up, an' take her ter the depot?" she asked, restlessly.

"She said she guessed she'd walk," said the other with a troubled look.

"Wa-al!" said the taller woman with peculiar bitterness. She raised her hands, then dropped them. In any one of less angular outline, of less evident, well-ordered respectability, the gesture would have seemed almost tragic. The oppressive silence deepened.

At last the taller woman broke out, aggressively, though in an uncertain voice. "Sarah White," she said, "it's no use your lookin' *that* way. It's all well enough for you 'n the minister. But as ter seein' her settin' there, an' not a wrinkle on her face, an' Leander lyin' in his coffin, an' then shakin' hands with her, an' makin' much of her, arterwards,—as is what folks expected, I s'pose,—'twas more 'n I *could* do."

"She was cryin'," said Mrs. White, softly.

"Oh, she can *cry*," said the other. "But, I tell yer, Sarah White, instead o' listenin' ter the minister an' the hymns,—as Lord knows I'd ha' been glad ter, ef she hadn't been a-settin' there—I jest went over, 'n' over, 'n' over the hull thing in my mind. I guess ef I've been over 't onct, I hev fifty times,—sence *he* went. An' ter think I'd a'most forgot it! Yes, a'most forgot it all—in all these years. An' he never spoke,—never but jest that onct. I dunno's I ever told yer *jest* how 'twas, Sarah; but I d'clare I b'lieve I will,—*now*."

She began to speak more rapidly, but in a monotonous tone, as if rehearsing something recently learned by rote. "Twas the week afore the weddin', an' Leander he come inter the orchard lookin' fur me. I was in the grape-arbor, an' purty down in the mouth, too, I guess. 'Twarn't that I didn't like the girl wal enough. I allus said you couldn't *but* like her—same as you'd like a nice kitten that comes rubbin' round 'thout bein' coaxed. An' 'tain't likely I'd ha' taken her in, an' *done* fur her 's I *did*, ef I *hadn't* liked her purty well. But I knew well enough what a sister is, in a house where there's a wife. Howsomever, *his* face was bright enough fur two; an' he didn't notice *me*. 'Come on, Lott, an' help find Delia,' he called out. You remember them little downy side-whiskers he uster wear? An' his lips was smilin', as if

he couldn't help it. I never see him look like that again. 'Twas jest a week afore the weddin', an' Harry 'd come down the week afore *that*. He hadn't bin down sence the great success he made with his inventin'."

Mrs. White stirred, sympathetically. Miss Longman was sitting bolt upright, looking straight before her. "Do yer set all right, Charlotte?" asked Mrs. White, anxiously; but the other, wholly given to her memories, went on:

"Wal, we run up-stairs. I thought I knew well 'nough where Delia was. The dress was done, an' layin' on the spare-chamber bedstead, an' I thought like as not she'd be in there, lookin' at it. If they hadn't been so taken up, they'd ha' heard us comin'. Delia she was by the bed, where the dress was, an' Harry he was standin' with his arm round her an' his face as red as fire; an' jest as we come in, she looked up an' he kissed her. Leander went down-stairs withouten a word. The suddenness of it all made *me* kinder queer, I guess. I recollec' sayin' he'd oughter be ashamed; an' the brother-in-law 'd the right ter kiss the bride,—an' I dunno *what* all. 'Not *that* way,' he sez;—an' that was all. When Harry come down-stairs, at last, I thought, the minnit I set eyes on his face, that maybe Leander was in the rights o't. He called Harry inter the settin'-room where he was. I couldn't help hearin' part o' what went on. I heard Leander's voice as I never heard 't afore nor sence. 'By God!' he sez,—an' you know he never swore, Sarah—'By God, you *shall* marry her! *Let* 'em talk! You *shall* marry her.' Then Harry said somethin', an' I heard Leander, again. 'Do yer love her,—or not?' he called out;—an' then they said somethin' else, an' 'twas all quiet. But if ever there was a hell in any house, 'twas in our'n that week, Sarah. Delia, she cried. Then she said she'd go 'way somewhere 'forever.' But Leander *declared* she shouldn't. So she set with her eyes on her plate, not eatin' a thing ter speak of, all that week. Harry, he went off, an' said he'd be back, in plenty o' season. I see 'em look at each other when he went,—they didn't seem ter darst do much more,—an' I d'clare I thought, ef I'd

never thought afore, thet Leander *was* in the rights o't. Wal, you know how we had the weddin', on Tuesday, jest the same, with only your folks an' ourn. An' you know how folks talked; an' how my brother Leander *looked* all that summer. An' now when this woman comes down ter his fun'ral and sets an' *cries*, you an' the minister think *that's* enough. It beats *me!* An' I dunno but you pity her;—yer *do*, fur aught *I* know."

"No-o, I dunno's I say it's *enough*—exactly," said Mrs. White, dubiously. But she added, with more spirit: "Sorry's I be fur *you*, Charlotte Longman, I *do* say,—an' I know I'd oughter say it,—that it ain't fur *us* ter say who's punished an' who ain't punished, in this world. An' it ain't fur us ter try ter punish people, I should say;—much less in our own houses."

Miss Longman rose impatiently, a world of revolt in the movement.

"I guess we might's well go, now," she said curtly.

The two passed through a wicket beside the house into a broad meadow, green, touched with russet. They went noiselessly, their footfalls solemnly muffled by the soft grass. The autumn afternoon was full of the pale glow of a sky of transparent clearness. The great peace of atmospheric purity seemed settling visibly over the wide space. Miss Longman moved quickly. Her tears had ceased, some time before, but there was a tense look on her strong, disfigured face. In spite of herself, old scenes still surged through her brain, wearied with night-watching and grief. Now, she saw Leander, his gray hair ruffled, his gray eyes looking indulgently over his newspaper when she spoke. She saw him leaning on his scythe, big drops on his bronzed, impassive forehead, pulling deep draughts from the jug she brought him. She saw him, still with herself, on the door-step, after a hard day's work,—for no one could say he was not a good farmer, did not keep things up, for all his oddly silent ways. There was a great stillness in the air, and themselves at peace, they watched the fading sky. Full of anguish, she saw him on his death-bed, the fierce color in his long, unshaven cheeks, the softened, yet clear look of his eyes, the tumbled

sheets which she could not straighten often enough. And she heard again, alas! the strange words he had let fall with such evident sincerity. That evening had seemed very still. With her strong arms and knees she had pushed his bed to the window. His eyes had swept the sky, before he spoke.

"She was allus a purty creetur, Lott,—with them lips an' eyes o' hern," he had said. "Sing'lar how I've allus felt as ef she b'longed ter me, by rights,—*spite* of all. P'raps ef I hadn't made her marry him—right off,—she'd ha' come round. Women *do*. I've thought o' that a heap o' times. But I was crazy,—like them martyrs they tell 'bout, Lott. Yes, 'twas like boilin' oil. Sence this fever, it feels jest's I did then,—only now I kinder like it,—yes, I kinder like it *now*. It's bein' young again. An' I see her plainer 'n ever I did;—an' I've seed her *purty* plain, too, sometimes;—*heard* her, too. Did you ever think that leetle brown bird that sung them there dry summers in the elm sounded like her?—Wal, I guess I *should* ha' struck him,—sooner 'r later,—ef he hadn't gone off 'fore the weddin'. But, Lor, I guess 'twarn't no way ter do. I s'pose he's gin her heaps o' fixins',—fust an' last;—but I allus said he warn't no great hand with women-folks, fur all's fine ways. But ef she *was* sorry, whose fault was't? I've thought o' *that* a powerful deal, too. But I listened enough. Arter she was gone ter bed, an' you was quiet up-stairs, I'd creep out, an' listen, an' listen. When she was sobbin' so, ef she'd said a word 'bout *me*, my name or anythin', yer know,—an' she *might* ha' said *that*,—I'd ha' opened the door, an' gone in, an' tuk her in my arms;—or else I'd struck her. I've often wondered *which*. It's most crazed me sometimes,—seein' her 'round so. But mostly I've liked it. I guess there ain't *many* places 'bout the old farm, where she ain't been with me. I've had her in my arms, sometimes;—but in a dream;—yes, I guess mostly in a kinder dream."

His sister had held her breath for him to go on. "I kin feel her pantin',—best," he had said, then; "that was when I ast ef we hadn't better git married, yer

know. I thought I'd do't 'bout *this* time o'day,—when yer don't see each other so awful plain; 'n' I waited fur a *real* good sunset. Seemed ter me 'twould make a heap o' differ whether 'twas red or yaller.—Maybe ef I'd tuk a yaller one, I'd 'a' done better;—but somehow I allus liked this red kind best.—There she is!—I declar ef she's altered a mite this evenin'."

As his sister had heard the words, they had seemed to burn her;—as if they too were full of fever. He was not raving. He had only spoken himself out,—at last.

Miss Longman was of those who cherish the past for its simple tendernesses, its homely devotions, but she must feel herself moving, pre-eminent among these memories, to give them value. Now in the torturing confusion of her mind, before this passion, surprised as it were, still living in the sick man, one feeling predominated,—an intolerable sense of repulsion, of almost physical disgust, as before something so strange, so unexpected, as to seem unlovely, uncanny,—shameless almost.

But now the grave-yard was in sight. From a slope the two women saw the few tall shafts shining pallidly; the dingier tablets standing at many angles; here and there a faded nosegay on a mound. That morning Miss Longman, her veil decorously drawn over her working face, had solemnly approached the cemetery from the village road. Now, her veil thrown back, she rapidly picked her way between the graves.

Suddenly she stopped. "Sarah," she said, with a kind of gasp, "will you tell her to go away?—that *I 'm* here?"

Mrs. White stood petrified. By the grave they sought stood a woman. She was very pretty. Her roses were a little faded, for she was no longer young, but the curves of her face and figure still retained a charm. For the second time that day Mrs. White noticed how her soft lips trembled;—and also the smoothness and delicacy of her quiet dress;—but everybody said Harry Longman had made a fortune "inventin'." As in a dream, Mrs. White saw the woman beseech Miss Longman by look and gesture, and when the other did not

respond, turn slowly away. Then Sarah White roused herself. All her Christian meekness and forbearance seemed to surge within her. They overcame the intense repellant power she felt in the woman beside her, and she spoke.

"Call her back," she said.

"Call her *back?*" said the other, fiercely.

"You ast her ter come," went on the admonitory voice.

"No, *he* ast her," said the other, almost with a wail. The secret of all her bitterness was in the cry. She tossed her hands, again with that touch of the tragic which had vaguely alarmed her friend. Her face grew red as if in the glow of a hot fire.

"No, *he* ast her," she repeated, as if forced, in justification, to say it. "She spoiled his life fur him,—an' he loved her,—jest the same,—allus,—ter the very end. An', I never knew 't. 'Harry?—don't yer ask Harry,' he said;—but, he *wanted* her. An' I ast her down.—But ain't *that* enough? How darst she foller him so?—out *here?*"

Mrs. White cleared her throat. "Do yer think he meant yer ter treat her,—like this,—when she *did* come?" she asked at last, in a kind of ecstasy of inexorable mildness.

Miss Longman turned to the grave. The stiff bouquets were awry upon it. They had begun to fade, and in the sunshine the clayey soil had already become caked and cracked. The spot had a look of discomfort, of drought and bleakness. Her head seemed bursting; her soul rose in protest against Sarah, against all stupid people who could not understand of what she was robbed. She made one more fierce effort to regain the best she knew, her life, her past, old and dear habits of thought, the half-contemptuous tolerance for the half-forgotten Delia, the intense, almost maternal sense of possession in the dead man. With her wounded love still struggling within her, she gazed on the grave. She sought to read it as she might now have sought to read the gentle, impassive face beneath;—striving, at last, to understand him, to grasp the real among the thoughts

and wishes she still instinctively lent him. A few birds not yet flown South swept through the limpid air from one clipped evergreen to another. Miss Longman said at last, hoarsely: "Is she in sight yet?" The peace-maker flew to the gate, and the two women reached the grave out of breath, as if they had been running. Miss Longman stretched a hand across the ugly mound, and took one of Mrs. Harry Longman's slim ones.

"There, there, there—*Delia*," she said, with an effort, "p'rhaps you couldn't help all you've done—there, there."

Mrs. Longman's large eyes swam, her pretty figure swayed, as if she would have leaned across the grave for a warmer embrace, but the other shook her by the hand conclusively, though she caught her breath in something like a sob. "There, there, *there*," she repeated, and then, with another click in her throat,—"p'raps you *couldn't* help it. I don't jest know *whose* fault 'tis. I'm so mixed up, I can't think. But *you* go 'way 'thout any feelin'. I guess, I kin stand what's sent me." She would have dropped the other's hand, but it clung to hers. "Yer might write,—now an' then,—'bout Harry,—an'—an'—the childern," said Miss Longman; "an' you'd *better* stop 'n' ask Abe ter hitch up." Mrs. Longman sobbed "Yes," lingering over the hand she held. Then, after a little, as if further speech were forbidden her, she went softly away. The two women watched her threading her graceful way between the mounds, then passing through the gate, then down the long, maple avenue which led to the village. Now and then a yellow leaf dropped and fluttered feebly about her, like a big, yellow butterfly struck with sudden age or chill.

When she was gone, Mrs. White would have put an arm around her friend, but the other shook her off, and stooping over the grave, began to straighten the fading flowers awry upon it, with a gesture which brought the sudden, hot tears to Sarah White's kind eyes.

Readers of this magazine have no excuse for ever finding themselves started upon a kind of story which they do not like. The object of the little note which precedes each tale is not to amuse, nor to fill space, nor to decorate. It is to inform the intending reader, not only of the origin but of the character of the tale which follows. The wife of one of our most distinguished public men not long ago remarked: "It is a comfort to take up ROMANCE. By reading its headings I can always skip the ghost stories, and those horrible tales which I never read without suffering, and can find the kinds that I like." The following powerful tale by Eugene Moulton (made into English for ROMANCE by M. E. B.) should not be read by people with tender nerves. It is the second in our sample group of Realistic Stories.

THE BLACK FLY.

AMONG the many peculiarities which made Capt. Cougourdan the most unique person in the world, there was one more fantastic and ridiculous than all the rest. Capt. Cougourdan, an old sea dog whom neither tempests, death, nor cannon had ever made wink an eye, *was afraid of flies.*

My first feeling, when I noticed this singularity, was to laugh heartily—thinking it a good joke. But when I saw how pained and mortified he was at my ridicule, I determined never to allude to it again. One can explain these absurdities in people of a highly nervous temperament, but Capt. Cogourdan had not a delicate or nervous organization; so I felt sure there was some mystery under this peculiarity. I was not mistaken; and the secret was revealed to me one morning when we were taking breakfast together at the Café Vert in Marseilles.

It was a lovely winter day. We had a fire in the room; but the air was so soft and balmy that we had breakfasted with the windows open. After a little, however, feeling a slight chill, we closed the windows, lighted our cigars and began to talk of the Captain's last voyage to Africa.

"You don't know the people of Zanguebar," he said.

"The men are the bravest soldiers—the women—hark! what is that? Didn't you hear something?" He looked hastily around.

I listened. "No." I could hear nothing.

"Ah! you heard that," he repeated, placing his hand upon my arm. "There it is again! Now you heard it!" gazing with frightened eyes at a distant corner of the room, where a shrill buzzing, a kind of jerky singing, was distinctly heard. "It is there, watching us, waiting to dart upon us. I recognize the buzzing, and if it but touches us, we are dead men."

Beginning to be a little alarmed, I said, "What is it? I see nothing."

"For your life, don't move; let me kill it," said the Captain. Seizing a napkin from the table and wrapping it around his hand, he crept toward the spot where we heard the buzzing. There he stopped, and turning to me said, "Wrap something around your hand, and come here softly." I did as directed, and going toward him, said, "What is it?" "Hush! be quiet; don't you see it? there it is resting—look." Then I saw the object of all this excitement—*a fly sitting on the wall.* My first impulse was to laugh, but Cougourdan was so pale and excited that the terrible thought came to my mind, "He is mad"; but I merely said, "What! that fly!" He answered in a low voice "Hush! be careful; we must crush it. You strike at the same time I do, and we may be fortunate enough to kill it." We stealthily drew near. Our hands came down upon the wall as in a single blow. The fly soared away unharmed, and lighted on the table.

"Missed it, by Heaven!" muttered Cougourdan. "We are lost."

"Lost!" I exclaimed. "What, for a fly?"

"Yes," he replied; "that is the Black Fly; one touch of its deadly wings is death—death of the most loathsome kind."

"But we are not obliged to stay here, Captain; let us open the door and go out," I said.

"What! open the door and let it escape to poison all Marseilles, and perhaps breed others! Now you can

go, if you choose, but I have too much respect for you to believe you capable of such cowardice."

Without saying another word he aimed a fearful blow at the fly resting on the table. It flew away to the window. Then commenced a terrible combat. Captain Cougourdan was no longer a man, but a savage beast, with flaming eyes and features distorted with rage,—leaping, bounding from one end of the room to the other, climbing upon the furniture, upsetting it, breaking it in his pursuit of that flitting creature which appeared to take a wicked pleasure in eluding him; in truth, it seemed as if some infernal spirit possessed that fly and directed its flight.

When Cougourdan's hand would almost touch it, away it flew to the further end of the room. When he climbed on the table to reach it on the ceiling, presto,—it was on the floor. At first I tried to join in the chase, but the leaps and bounds of the Captain were so fast and furious that I was run against and upset two or three times. I finally concluded that it was best to remain in one corner and wait for the fly to come my way.

Gradually Cougourdan became more tranquil, and seemed disposed to try patience and strategy. He persistently followed the fly, and did not allow it to rest a moment. It was evidently becoming weary. A profound silence reigned in the room, broken only by the continuous buzzing of the insect as it flew from place to place. Suddenly the Captain gave a roar of triumph, as his hand struck the table; he rolled it around two or three times with all his might; then, raising it, we saw in the folded napkin the half-crushed form of the Black Fly.

I know not how much the scene which I had witnessed had excited me; but that miserable insect had something so sinister and venomous in its appearance that it made me shudder. It was very large, humpbacked, knotty, and bristling with hairy protuberances; in truth, it looked like a living poison.

Cougourdan, with bent head, silently regarded it; a kind of savage melancholy succeeded the tempest of fury which had possessed him; his eyes had a saddened

look, as if evoked by tragic memories. He remained thus a few moments without speaking, every now and then passing his hand over his brow, as if something troubled him.

"Ah, my friend," said I, affectionately taking his hand; "can't you tell me what it is?" In a low voice he replied: "After what you have seen, you can understand how afraid I am of flies. To-day is not the first time you have noticed it, and, but for shame, I would have explained it long ago. You know it is not an easy thing for Marius Cougourdan (who is not afraid of man or devil) to confess that he is afraid of a fly; but when I hear one of these ugly beasts buzzing, my blood runs cold; great drops of sweat break out all over me, and it is as much as I can do to keep from crying out for help. I acknowledge that I am afraid of flies, and shall be to the day of my death. But before you look upon me with contempt, listen, and learn why I am so afraid of them.

"It was in 1812, during the war with the English, I had been cruising in the Bay of Bengal for six months. My ship, *La Bonne Mère*, was young then, and so was I. I had a picked crew of forty-five men—a dozen guns of good calibre (they were not allowed to rust, I can assure you), and plenty of powder and shot. I passed and repassed the English cruisers with impunity. They had not a single vessel which could follow me. One day, under the very nose of their admiral-ship, which was anchored near the shore, I took one of their sloops, and before they could raise anchor, I was away and gone. During that campaign I took one brig, two schooners, and seven merchant vessels. Ah! in those days, I had no love for the English, and they returned it with all their hearts, I assure you.

"Now you can well see that all this could not take place without some damage and loss of men. I needed repairs and a little rest, and on the 25th of May I set sail for France, where I intended to repair my vessel and replenish my crew.

"We had been *en route* about four weeks; the winds were very variable and weak. We had to work the

ship almost continuously, which was very disheartening and hard upon the men. It was frightfully hot, and our provisions were getting low. Our water was very bad, and several of the crew were sick with the scurvy. I was very much troubled to see these men, who had escaped so many dangers, fall a prey to inaction and simple ennui, and I often prayed that something would happen to revive their courage.

"In talking one day with my mate, I said: 'God help me if I seem hard and wicked, but what was the use of fighting these English if we are to die here in this way? It would be far better to fall in their hands. If the good Lord would only send us one of their vessels—ah, well! —we would show them!'

"Here I stopped and went aloft to look out for some vessel which would bring us news of France. I do not know whether the good Lord heard my wish that day and determined to punish me, or whether the devil was let loose upon me; but in less than two days after this, I was standing upon the bridge, my spy-glass in my hand, when I saw an English merchant-ship directly in our course.

"'*Ma foi!*' I said to my mate, 'we didn't seek her; she was sent to us. We cannot allow her to laugh in our face. Then we may find some fresh water on board of her,—that would be something.'

"I issued orders to give chase to that vessel. What joy among the men! If I had embarked them for Paradise, they would not have been more content.

"Ah, my friend! the life of a sailor is often hard and rough, but when he sees his ship dressed from top to toe—the shining guns and cannon loaded to the muzzle, only waiting the word of command to vomit forth a rain of grape and canister—grappling-irons and boarding-knives all ready—with forty good men, armed to the teeth, eager for the fray, like tigers scenting blood afar off,—ah!"— (here the Captain brushed off a tear with his hand)—"it brings a thrill, an emotion no other people can know."

He was silent for a moment. He never liked to give the details of his battles; it was a way of showing his

modesty. But I lost nothing, thanks to the mobility of his face. His flashing eyes and frowning brow, above all, the triumphant smile upon his lips—told me the taking of the ship far more eloquently than if the hero had spoken.

"After we had manned our prize," he continued, "I put my mate with fifteen sailors on board of her, retaining thirty for myself. She was a three-masted English merchant-ship, sailing from Calcutta to the Cape with a cargo of indigo, silks, and muslins. She was well-provisioned with salt meats, dried vegetables, biscuit, rum, and fresh water. I took a good part for myself, and left sufficient for my mate and his men. I gave him the spoiled provisions we had on board to feed the English. It was but just, don't you think so? They could eat what we had been forced to live upon. All our arrangements being completed, we again set sail for France with a jolly breeze and a beautiful sea.

"We sailed in this way for two days. It was now the night of the second day, a few minutes before twelve o'clock. The day had been crushingly hot. All seemed well on board, and I had retired to my bed, but not to sleep. I was thinking how lucky I had been in taking that English ship and supplying my men with such good provisions. I was also calculating in my head the prize-money we would secure on this cruise, when suddenly my door burst open and my first lieutenant rushed in, crying, 'Captain, there are two of the men dead in their hammocks.'

"I leaped out of bed and, catching him by the arm, exclaimed, 'Dead! are you mad?'

"'No, no, Captain; they are dead and already decomposing.' With that he seized my hand and dragged me on deck. I shall never forget the sight which met my eyes. The sailors, some of them dressed, some only in their shirts, were huddled together, gazing with terror-stricken eyes down the hatchway. When they saw me, without speaking, they pointed down the gangway.

"'What is it, my boys? what is the matter?' I cried. No one answered—only raised their hands, pointing at

some invisible horror. 'What is the meaning of this? Can't you speak? Say, lieutenant, what is it?

"'Captain—captain—' said the officer, trembling and stammering; 'it is so frightful that I cannot believe it. The midnight watch went to bed at six o'clock—all well —nobody sick or complaining. At five minutes of twelve o'clock the captain of the watch called his men. When he got on deck, there were only three, instead of five. Furious, he rushed down to wake the other two, Victor and Albert; he called them, shook them; no answer; he then pulled down Victor's hammock, and saw a corpse with livid, putrefying features,—the stomach swollen to the size of a barrel. His cries aroused the crew, and they found Albert's body in the same condition. When they saw their dead comrades, the men fled, and no one will go down there again.'

"I said, 'Bring me a lantern,' and accompanied by my lieutenant, I descended the hatchway. A stench met me—so deadly, so overpowering, I thought I should fall. I raised the lantern to the face of one of the dead men; the sight was so awful that the lantern slipped from my hand, and falling to the floor was extinguished. We were now in total darkness. The lieutenant and I began to feel around for the lantern. The idea of being in the dark with these horrible bodies made his teeth chatter, as well as mine. Groping around with my hands stretched out, I suddenly heard, just over my head, a kind of buzzing. In a situation like this, my friend, everything takes on a sinister aspect. I thought, 'Perhaps it is the soul of one of these poor men who died without confession, asking us for our prayers.' But I only said, 'Is that you, breathing in that way, lieutenant?'

"'No, Captain, I thought it was you. Maybe it is a cockroach.'

"'No, it is not a cockroach. Who ever heard of a roach buzzing like that?'

"'Oh!' cried the lieutenant, 'something stung me on the lip. Heavens, how it burns!'

"Just then I put my hand on the lantern and said, 'Come, let us go up. We must have these poor men carried away.'

"When I got on deck, I immediately questioned the crew—interrogated every sailor, one after the other. It was impossible to learn how these men had died. I said, 'Were none of you awake during the six hours before the watch? Did you hear nothing?'

"They nudged each other and shrugged their shoulders, but said not a word. Finally, I saw one of them shaking his head as if he wished to speak. 'Ah! you heard something. What was it?'

"'Captain, ah! yes. I heard—I am sure I heard something. Maybe it was a dream, but as sure as you see my hand, I heard——'

"Here I caught him by the collar and, giving him a good shaking, said, 'What did you hear?'

"'Well, captain, it was such a little thing that it is not worth telling. I heard a fly buzzing—a big fly, too; it went like this—bzzzz-tik.'

"Just then a Parisian, who had a tongue the best-hung of all the crew, said, 'Excuse me, Captain, but the men over there say the English poisoned the provisions we took from them so as to kill us all.'

"Ha! this was a blow. Could those poor fellows have been poisoned? No, that was impossible. We had been living on the food taken from the English vessel for two days; if that were so, we sheuld all have been dead by this time.

"'Poisoned!' I exclaimed. 'Do you think a sailor, no matter under what flag he sails, could be guilty of such infamy?'

"'No, no, the Captain is right,' they all cried out with one voice.

"'Now, my boys, you know, death comes to us all some time or another, and when the time comes, we must go; the hour came for our poor comrades. Let us say the '*De profundis*' for the repose of their souls; then cast them in the sea. Who will go down and help me bring up the dead bodies?'

"Nobody spoke. They drew back, giving frightened looks down the hatchway. I saw they were wild with fear, and said to myself, 'If I am rough with them, they may lose their heads altogether and rebel.'

"I stood a few moments coolly regarding them, but at heart very much worried. I cursed the day I had wished to meet an English vessel, and knew the good Lord had sent that merchant-ship as a punishment for my sins; so I dared not ask Him to help me out of this trouble. At last an idea came to me. I said, 'Are there no good comrades here? Do you refuse to give these poor men the burial you would give a dog?' Scornfully looking at them, I continued: 'I compliment you on the beautiful account I shall give of you in my log-book. Another thing: I shall be able to count the cowards. All of you who dare not go down with me and the lieutenant, to bring up our poor comrades, will stand on one side and leave the brave sailors on the other.' At these words they all turned round, each one pounding and beating his neighbor, and daring him to be a coward; then, with one voice, they cried out, 'Aye, aye, Captain, we will all go with you.' Ah, my friend! if you only know how to take a sailor! They are brave as lions, but tender as little children.

"I thanked them. Then we started down for the dead bodies. They were in such a condition that we had to roll their hammocks, bedclothes, and all, into one bundle, tie a rope around them, and throw them into the sea.

"After this was done, I ordered the hammocks and clothes of the other men to be spread on deck, for fear the disease might prove contagious. While the sailors were busy with this work, I sat on deck, a prey to very sad reflections, I assure you. The sky was covered with heavy clouds; our lanterns only made the darkness more sombre and appalling. The lieutenant was superintending the work, when I saw him coming toward me, staggering and stumbling, and with his handkerchief pressed to his mouth.

"'Well, lieutenant, have you finished?'

"'Not yet, captain; but I don't know what is the matter with me. My head turns round, my legs give way, and I have an invincible desire to sleep.'

"'Ah! it was that horrible stench. I don't feel very comfortable myself,' I said.

"He sat down by me, and leaning his head on the back of the seat, said no more.

"We remained thus for some time. The clouds gradually disappeared, the moon came out; I turned to speak to him. Great God! his face was black and livid —terribly swollen, and he seemed asleep. I called him, shook him,—he opened his eyes in an unconscious way, and would have fallen to the floor if I had not supported him. I called for help. We carried him to his berth, and did everything we could to save him, but all in vain; decomposition set in immediately. He died at four o'clock, just as the day was breaking.

"There was no doubt of it. The poor boy!—he was only twenty-four years old—had died in the same way as the two sailors. The buzzing we had heard, and the sting which the lieutenant had complained of, were due to some venomous insect. Death was concealed in our midst and flying around; we knew not when or where to expect it. What must I do? If I told the crew, they might become demoralized and forsake the ship. If I did not tell them, how could they guard against this deadly thing which might sting and kill them? And it was all my fault, and the fault of that devilish English vessel—My God! what should I do?

"After mature reflection, I concluded that it was best to tell them. I assembled the crew, and after many preambles, so as not to frighten them, I said: 'There is surely a poisonous fly in our midst which has stung our poor comrades and caused their death. We must find that fly and kill it.'

"I made them take rope-brooms, and sweep every hole and corner of the ship. Then I retired to my cabin to write in my log-book the dismal events of the night.

"Next morning, after putting the hammocks and clothing in place, the men seemed easier, when I suddenly saw three or four sailors run to one of their comrades. I hurried forward to learn what was the matter.

"On seeing me, one of the men raised his hand with a despairing gesture and cried out, 'Captain, I am a dead man; the fly has stung me.'

"I ran to him. There was a red spot on his cheek, and in the centre a tiny speck of blood. I carried him to my room—cut open the jaw, let it bleed freely, bathed it in rum, alcohol, and vinegar—even washed the wound with a brush. Then I left him in the care of two sailors and returned on deck, determined to find this miserable insect which menaced us all.

"It would be useless to tell you the wild ideas which came into my head; all kinds of death and destruction I concocted for this venomous creature; finally, after turning it over and over in my mind, I arranged my plan and gave the necessary orders for its execution.

"I had the fire-pumps placed on deck at the head of the hatchway. I made my men load their pistols to the muzzle with fine shot (I had a good many sacks of this on board for killing birds); then I said; 'Now, my boys, we must kill this deadly fly. We will first wash out the whole ship; then we will try the shot.'

"We worked the pumps a full hour—a flood of water rushing over the decks. Then I said, 'If it is not drowned and is still flying around, we will get him this time.' So I ordered my men to aim their pistols in every direction down the hatchway, and gave the word, 'Fire.'

"Thirty pistols went off at the same time. 'If it escaped *that*,' I said, 'he is hard to kill; but I am sure it is dead, either drowned or shot into a thousand pieces, and the first one who speaks of that fly'—here I significantly tapped the barrel of my pistol. Just then one of the sailors left in charge of the sick man came up to say that his comrade seemed better. To my great surprise. he continued to improve—passed a good night, and next day was nearly well.

"It is useless to say that from that time no one dared speak a word of the fly, but it was plainly to be seen that my sailors were no longer the same men; they had an anxious, harassed look, continually watching and looking from right to left, every now and then suddenly stopping to listen. They no longer laughed or told jokes; they were quiet and watchful, like men expecting some concealed danger which they dared not speak

of. I saw that all were possessed with one idea—the fear of that fly. Ah, my friend! you cannot imagine how cruel it was for a captain to see his men, who in a six months' cruise had taken a brig, two schooners, and seven merchant-ships, lose all their courage, all energy, and become as cowardly and timid as little children before a fly—no, not even a fly, but the ghost of a fly. It was fifteen days before we could reach France, and in time of war no one could tell what might happen with a demoralized crew.

"So I must do something, and I thought if I could only show them this fly—let them see it, dead or alive—they would be cured of their folly. But where was I to find a fly? On land, easy enough; but in a ship far out at sea it seemed impossible. Still, this did not prevent me from saying, 'I will find that fly.' Now who can find, if he does not seek?

"I took five men under the pretence of cleaning the ship, and from morning till night, from the helm to the bowsprit, from the keel to the top of the highest mast, there was not a spot or crevice which we did not visit and search. We had worked in this way for nearly a week when one afternoon I went with these sailors into the forecastle where the men slept. In one corner there was a heap of old, worn-out shirts. I pushed them aside with my foot, and said to a sailor just behind me, 'What is that? I see something black lying on the floor. Is it the end of a cigar? It is not possible that any one has dared to smoke here.' The sailor picked up the object and handed it to me. As soon as I saw it, I made the sign of the cross and cried out, 'Holy Mother, I thank thee! I have found what I sought. Don't you see it is that deadly beast—the Black Fly?'

"I rushed on deck, assembled the crew and, showing it to them, said: "See how stupid you were, always twisting and craning your heads watching for that fly! You can't conceal anything from me. I saw you, and if I had not by a miracle found the venomous thing, I verily believe you would have gone mad. Now I hope you are satisfied *that it is really dead.*'

"It was too droll to see how their faces brightened;

they actually became gay, as they took the fly and leisurely examined it. One old tar, on returning it to me, said, 'Ah, Captain! I am so glad you found it, for, in spite of all we could do, we could not keep from thinking of that fly. We always heard it buzzing around our ears, and I declare to you if I did not see that it was dead, and had been dead a long time, I could swear I heard it buzzing at the door of your cabin last night; but now I see it was only a fancy.'"

You can imagine with what interest I followed the captain's story. But at this incident, so suggestive of the energy and shrewdness of this unique individual, I could not keep from clasping his hand and exclaiming, "And so you found the fly, Captain! Well, that surpasses all!"

He looked at me in a quizzical way, a peculiar smile parting his lips. "Found the fly!" he said. "Do you think so? Well, you shall see.

"I was determined to find it in some way, but terribly puzzled what to do, and would have given ten thousand francs for a fly. I commenced searching for one in every direction; but you can't comb the devil if he has no hair; there were no flies to be found, so I determined to make one. Do you know what I did? I caught a cockroach, cut down his wings and body to the size of a big fly; soaked him in ink, then dried him, and threw him down before that sailor when he was not looking."

"*Ma foi*, Captain! You don't expect me to believe that your sailors swallowed this, and thought it was the Black Fly?"

"Ah, my friend! you don't know what children sailors are."

Here he gave a long breath, a sigh of remorse, and raising his eyes to Heaven, said, "That fly made me commit a deadly sin, but the good Lord punished me for that lying cockroach. Do you see that?" uncovering his wrist and showing me a deep round scar. "I did that myself. If I had not, I should not be here today to tell this story. Perhaps you think, after what I have told you, that all was ended, and we heard no more of the Black Fly. Ah, you shall see. While I

was modelling her likeness in the body of my cockroach, she was laughing at me and tranquilly promenading my ship from one end to the other. The buzzing which the sailors had heard was not imaginary, and their fancies were only too true.

"About a week after this adventure of the cockroach, I was sitting in my cabin examining my chart, when I heard something buzzing behind my back. I turned around to look. Suddenly I felt something like a needle pierce my left wrist. I gave a quick slap with my right hand, and crushed a great fly like the one you see there. Holy Mother! What should I do? I looked at the spot; it was already red and beginning to swell—a tiny drop of blood in the centre. There was a pair of sharp scissors lying on my table. I seized them, quick as a flash, and with my right hand cut out a great lump of flesh all around the sting. I allowed it to bleed freely; then bathed it in alcohol and ammonia, and bandaged it. But not a word did I breathe to my crew of how I had hurt my hand.

"This fly came from the provisions which I had taken from the English vessel, and never shall I get it out of my head but that it was sent as a punishment for my sin in wishing to encounter one of their ships when there was no necessity for it. You see when I commit a sin, I do not try to find some one to lay it on."

"But, Captain! what about that cockroach?" I said.

"For that lie I was punished, and shall bear the mark to my dying day."

The captain continued, "When we reached Marseilles, I told an eminent physician my story. He said it was the Black Fly of the Ganges, very common in the environs of Calcutta. The natives call them 'Breeders of Pestilence.'

"Now, my friend, you know why I am so afraid of flies."

Mr. John Strother, who has written for ROMANCE this powerful sketch of life among the railroad-builders of the South, is evidently an apostle of Realism. It cannot be claimed that his story is perfectly agreeable, but it is undoubtedly a life-like picture, and a fine example of its school. It forms the third in our group of Realistic Stories.

SLAVIN'S CUT.

I.

"SHET up down thar! Thar's been enough o' this hyar growlin' goin' on lately, an' I want it stopped, Bob Henderson."

"Can't help it, Cap'n. Ef dis nigger doan lemme 'lone, I'se gwine hu't him."

"That'll do now. Ef I heah any more out o' your black head, I'll crack it with a club. Shet up, I say! Nary 'nother word!"

Thus admonished, the negro turned again to his work, and the foreman shifted his weight to his other foot and took a fresh chew of tobacco.

Slavin's Cut was not a favorite with foremen or hands. Jack Slavin swore it was the meanest cut on the road. It was deep and full of springs which kept the bottom wet in the dryest weather and made a duck-pond of it during a rainy spell. Moreover the grade, throughout its entire length, ran downward, and the rock lay in strata sloping away from the grade point, besides being what the foreman called the "undoubtablest rock he ever tackled."

The negroes had another reason for disliking it, which was the tendency of the shattered rock on the slope to scale off, and descend unexpectedly on their heads; for, notwithstanding the popular belief that a negro's skull is unbreakable, Jack Slavin's squad did not consider theirs entirely rock-proof.

The foreman waited a minute or two for some fresh outbreak, but none occurring, he walked around the face of the cut and watched his force from a fresh standpoint. The change made no startling difference in its general appearance. Out ahead of the face three stout

darkies were putting down a hole with the churn-drill. In the cut were four "muckers," loosening material with their picks; eight shovellers, loading the two carts which were backed up to the face, and a long string of carts and mules drawn up on the right-hand side, waiting their turn.

On the dump two mules were moving slowly out with loaded vehicles, and two more were galloping back with empty ones; beyond them the dumpsman was leaning on his shovel, like a bronze statue, and in the extreme distance were O'Brien's drill men loading a hole. The drill men, muckers, shovellers, and dumpsman were alike ragged, dirty and filthy. The mules were better looking specimens of their race than the men, but with patched harness and caked from hoof to ear-tip with the yellow mud of the cut, they looked forlorn enough. Altogether the scene was more practical than picturesque, but this was not a matter of any moment to Slavin. He didn't demand picturesque surroundings, and wouldn't have recognized their attractions had he had them. So long as the mules hauled and the men shovelled and he got two dollars a day for superintending their efforts, he was satisfied and didn't trouble his head about æsthetic appearances. Throughout the month he would eat cornbread and bacon without a murmur, and on pay-day would draw his wages, pay his debts, and spend the surplus in a roaring spree. That was his idea of life.

For a while the work went on silently, then a thick-set, low-browed darky growled out something under his breath. Bob Henderson threw down his pick and looked up at the foreman:

"Cap'n Slavin, I'se doin' de bes' I can, an' I'se tryin' to please ye, but ef Bull Davis doan hesh his mouf, I'se boun' to say sumthin' an' do sumthin' too."

"What's the matter down there?" said another voice sharply, and Slavin, turning, saw the walking-boss alighting from his mule.

"It's these hyar dev'lish niggers, Cap'n Alston," he explained. "Bull Davis an' Bob air forever fussin', 'stead o' workin'."

"Separate 'em at dinner-time;—and you two do your fussing out of work-hours. If there's any more of this foolishness goes on, I'll take a hand myself, and you know me, Bull Davis."

Yes, Bull Davis knew him, for a scar on his forehead from the blow of a brass-knuckled fist reminded him of their last disagreement, and to the collection of pistol-balls which he carried in his anatomy, souvenirs of old-time encounters, Alston had contributed two, calibre 38.

He was what is called among the shanties a "low-down, rowdy nigger," and was credited with having killed two men on the works in West Virginia and a third in one of the Cotton States. Disliked and feared by his comrades, and looked upon with suspicion by the whites, he was tolerated on the line on account of his strength, which had given him his "sobriquet" of "Bull" and which made him a valuable hand in a rock-cut.

"A mean nigger, Slavin," said the walking-boss. "You're too easy on him. Work him like the deuce, and don't let him open his mouth. It's the only way to handle him."

"It's Bob makes all the fuss, Cap'n."

"Yes, Bob's mouthy, I know, but it's Davis that stirs him up. I know him of old. Keep 'em apart, or you'll have one of 'em to kill, to keep him from killing the other. There's bad blood between 'em."

A broad-chested, ebony giant straightened himself up and shouted, "Wa-a-tah boy!" The cry was repeated by one or two, and then the shovelling went on as before.

"Send Henderson," said Alston, in a low voice.

"Bob," shouted Slavin, "go take that thar bucket an' tote some watah."

The negro struck his pick into the side of the cut and, taking the bucket from the niche where it sat, started toward the grade point.

As he did so, the others completed the loading of the carts at the face; Bull Davis struck a cart-wheel with his shovel; and at the signal the mules, with a jump and a scramble, started out. The lead pair of the waiting-line were turned and backed in until the cry of

"Kyaht! Kyaht, boy!" warned them that they were in position for the work of loading to be resumed.

At this moment, either disturbed by the jar of the wheels or washed loose by a slender stream of water which trickled down its side, a rocky fragment, accompanied by a shower of dirt and pebbles, dropped from the slope and knocked Henderson's pick from its place.

"Bad sign dat," said the giant who had called for water.

"Wha' sign, Big Jim?" queried a shoveller.

"Dat sign, you fool niggah! Doan chew know when a rock hit a man's pick, nudder rock gwine hit he haid?"

"Go long! Who de debbil gwine bleebe dat? Rock hit dat ah pick ebery day."

"Yas, but not when he stick in de bank. You watch out an' mine what I done tole you, Jesse."

"Slavin," said the walking-boss, "that ledge is dangerous. Better knock it down with a bar before the next rain loosens it and drops it on your men's heads when they ain't looking for it."

"All right, sah, soon as I git faced up, I'm agoin' to put a pop hole in below thar—that'll shake her loose. I'm a leetle high an' a leetle narrer thar anyhow."

"You'll have to run a little high to keep out of the water, but make it full wide. Boy, straighten the pack on that mule;" and Alston rode on down the line.

A little farther on he met Bob returning with the water-bucket. He was a slightly-built negro, brownish in color, and with a more intelligent face than one usually finds around a railroad camp. It was his first year out, and he had not yet been stamped with the hard look and reckless bearing of a genuine grade-hand.

As Alston rode up, he set down his bucket and doffed his ragged caricature of a hat.

"Cap'n Alston, I wants to talk wid you, please, sah."

"Go on back to the cut with that water. I've got no time to listen to you now;" and then, noticing the man's look of disappointment, he called back in a kinder tone, "Come around to the office after supper, Bob, and I'll talk to you—and keep your mouth shut in the cut."

Then he met the resident engineer and forgot all

about it in a talk over the tile-piping supply and the advisability of putting cars in the mud-cut.

II.

When Alston retraced his steps toward the camps, it was almost sunset, and in the different cuts the hands were closing the day's labor with the time-honored custom of "singing it out."

Henshaw's force was declaring its intention of quitting forthwith:

"I'se gwine back to Alabamah,
Dah my home, dah my home,
Gwine down dah to see my mauma,
I'se gwine home, baby, I'se gwine home."

The walking-boss smiled grimly as he remembered that the entire force were transportation men, and that individually they owed enough at the commissary to keep them working a month at least to get out of debt.

O'Brien's negroes were narrating to a slower tune an every-day occurrence on the grade:

"De walkin'-boss come down de line.
Say I, 'My boss, please' gimme my time.'
De walkin'-boss go on down de line,
Say he, 'Poah niggah, y'ain't got no time."

At Slavin's the carts were standing idle, and the clink of hammers on the drill-heads told that he had commenced to put down his pop-holes. The strikers led the song here, emphasizing the end of each line with a swing of the hammer and the grunt without which no striker delivers a blow:

"Oh, Miss Lou! (Ugh) Oh, Miss Lou! (Ugh)
Oh, Miss Lulu gal! (Ugh) I wan' to tie yoah shoe! (Ugh)
Tie my shoe! (Ugh) Tie my shoe! (Ugh)
Tie my shoe myse'f, you niggah! (Ugh) 'Taint foh you to do! (Ugh)"

Beyond, another gang were driving steel to a still different tune:

"My gal done lef' me, O Lawd!
My gal done lef' me, O Lawd!
My gal done lef' an' I doan keer a d——
Foh I'll soon git anudder, O Lawd!"

The walking-boss rode on to the commissary, tied his mule, and went into the dining-tent, where the contractor was already at supper.

"Well, Alston?" said that individual, interrogatively.

"Lem O'Brien's made his shot, sir. Didn't do as well as I thought it would. Broke the slope a good deal and hardly lifted the top. Slavin's got his hole down ready to spring, but before he springs it he ought to open up his ditches again clear back to the grade-point. If it rains, the way that cut is now, it'll be belly-deep on a mule, if he don't fix a way for the water to get out. Henshaw crippled up that little brown mule this afternoon—let her run over the dump. Broke the cart all up and strained her fore-shoulder."

"D—— Henshaw," said the contractor. "Anything else?"

"No, sir."

"Well, there's a squad of men just come in. When you get your supper, I want you to take 'em over to those shanties behind the stables. Let Pat Murphy have three of them—Lem O'Brien one, and—and give Henshaw the rest."

"Mike Smith needs another shoveller."

"Let Mike have one then, and in the morning start three teams out for town; let two of 'em bring back feed, and let the other haul that dynamite over."

"Flour's running mighty low in the commissary," said the clerk.

"Is it? Take four of Slavin's mules, Alston, and send them after flour. He won't need 'em while he's ditching."

Alston finished his supper, after which he led the new arrivals to their quarters. Then he went to the stables to see the mules properly rubbed down and bedded, stopped to look in at a man who had been hurt at the trestle that morning, and finally turned back toward the commissary.

Everything was quiet and dark around the white quarters, but in the direction of the shanties the camp-fires were shining brightly and three or four banjoes were twanging out a lively accompaniment to a sort of

grand song-and-dance performance which was being enacted by the light of the pine-knots.

Alston stopped a moment to watch the scene. True, it was a familiar one, but the walking-boss, though hard and practical, had a vein of unconscious poetry in his composition, and the grotesque silhouettes capering uncouthly across the firelight to the lively music of the banjoes, and the song pealed out by half-a-hundred deep-mouthed singers, while in the background the tall, black pines rose far up into the star-lit sky, made a spectacle which fascinated him by its very weirdness.

He listened for the words of the song and recognized the steel-drivers' striking chorus:

"My gal done lef' an' I doan' keer a d——
Foh I'll soon git anudder, O Lawd."

"Curious things are niggers," he soliloquized. "Ten hours a day in a broiling sun would make a white man turn in at sunset and stay there till day—but it only seems to tone these fellows up for the night; and there they'll sit and guffaw and howl and dance till the barn-boss rings the feeding-bell to-morrow morning. When they do their sleeping is a mystery to me. Happiest people on earth, I do believe. Give a grade-nigger enough to eat, a few clothes to wear, and a fire to sit by in the winter-time, and he don't care a continental what else happens."

He walked on to the commissary, but at the door struck his foot against what was apparently a bundle of rags.

"Hello! What's this?"

"It's me, Cap'n. You sayed you'd talk to me arter supper, sah, an' I'se done been waitin' on ye."

"Oh, it's you, is it, Bob? Well, what's the trouble? Talk fast, I can't listen long."

The negro stood up and fumbled a moment at his solitary suspender. Then he said in a choking voice: "It's Lindy, Cap'n Alston."

The walking-boss thought a moment and recalled to mind a handsome mulatto girl who had arrived in camp in company with Henderson. He seated himself on the doorstep, and said: "Tell me the trouble, Bob."

"It's jes' dis, Cap'n. Lindy an' me was married—

show nuf married, sah, by de preachah—fore we lef' Spotsylvany. We come heah togedder, an' we live happy till dat Bull Davis come on de works. Den I doan know how 'twas, Cap'n, but 'peahs like sumthin' done cunjer her. Foh while she didn't eat nothin', an' when I say sumthin' to her, 'peahed like she didn't heah me, till at las' one day she lef' me an' went an' libbed wid him. Den I fixed to kill him, but 'peahed like sumthin' come to me an' say: 'Bob, you niggah, you didn't make dat gal happy when she lib wid you. Look at her now, fat, 'peart an' la'fin' all de time. You say you lubs her, den you go kill de man wha' makes her happy. You mean low-down niggah, you! Wha' kind lub's dat?' Cap'n, I couldn do it. Two time I sighted de pistol at him, an' once when nobody lookin' I stan' on de edge o' de cut an' staht to drop a crow-bar on he haid. But dat sumthin' allus say, 'Doan do dat, Bob. She happy now. Doan you do nuthin' to mek her onhappy.' Bull Davis doan know how close he been to death, ur he wouldn' keep on pickin' on me an' trowin' it up to me. It's jes' brekkin' my heart, Cap'n, it's jes' brekkin' it plum in two; but some day dat ah sumthin' 'll fergit to talk, an' I'll kill him. I'se a chu'ch member, I is, an' de Bible say, 'Dow shall not kill,' but ef Bull Davis doan lemme loan, I'se gwine kill him foh show, Cap'n."

"Well, Bob, there's plenty of other girls in the camp who would stick to you better than Lindy did."

"But dey ain't my wife, Cap'n, an' I doan lub none uv 'em like I does Lindy. I ain't feahed o' Bull Davis, an' I'd a' killed him long afore dis ef it hadn' a' been foh her sake. But to t'ink o' her gone an' him a-trowin' it up to me ebbery day an' all day, it's jes' wearin' de life out o' me. Deed it are, Cap'n."

"Well, Bob, it's hard, I know, but killing Bull Davis won't make Lindy like you any better. Just put up with it for a while and I'll change you into O'Brien's force, where he won't have a chance to worry you."

"Better lemme go in de mawnin', Cap'n."

"No. Slavin will want all his men to-morrow. I'll change you on Saturday."

"Berry well, sah."

"In the mean time, don't think too much about it, and ask Slavin to keep you on the far side of the cut from Davis. Good-night."

"Good-night, Cap'n, an' t'ank ye, sah."

The negro shuffled away and the walking-boss, looking at the newly-risen moon, noticed a circle around it.

"Rain," he muttered, and then entered the commissary and lay down on his cot. The banjoes were still playing, but the song seemed to have lost its lively tune and have a wailing sound:

"My gal done lef' me, O Lawd."

Not many railroad men, however, will lie awake long to ponder over a negro's troubles,—not even the negro himself,—and the walking-boss was soon snoring.

III.

When Alston rang the feeding-bell at four-thirty on the following morning, the rain was pouring in sheets, and the philosophical O'Brien turned over in his bunk with the remark: "More rain, more rest, me lads."

"Yes, but less cash on pay-day, you potato-eater," growled Henshaw.

"Who the divil cares? Pay-day ain't till next twentieth, an' we'll have slathers o' toime to make the rocks roll in before that."

At noon, however, the down-pour slackened, and the contractor, after eying the clouds for a while, ordered the gangs out to ditch and drain their cuts.

"If it's not too wet, Slavin, finish putting down your pop-holes this evening."

"All right, sah, guess I kin wu'k in 'em."

The cut looked even less inviting than usual—the road-bed, from the grade-point in, was a foot deep with semi-liquid muck, culminating at the face in a puddle of muddy water of uncertain depth, besides being choked in one or two places by rain-loosened masses of earth and rock which had dropped from the slope.

"Davis, you an' Big Jim git yer hammers, let Jesse hold fer ye, an' wu'k at that thar hole," said Slavin,

pointing to the half-finished pop just under the threatening ledge of which Alston had warned him. "The balance of ye git yer tools an' drain this heah watah off."

The men took their places, Jesse sitting on a powder-can with the drill between his knees, turning it slightly at every stroke, while Big Jim and Davis swung their hammers like two dusky cyclops and grunted emphatically. The work went on quietly enough. Even negroes don't sing when knee-deep in mud. The grating of the shovels, the dull "chug" of the picks and the sharper ring of the hammers made the only music.

Presently Big Jim ceased striking:

"Boss, dis heah drill mighty dull."

"Tote 'er to the shop, Jesse," said Slavin, searching with his eye among the shovellers for another holder.

"Hyar, you Bob Henderson, drop that thar shovel, an' hole that tother drill till Jesse gits back."

Bob laid his shovel down slowly and cast an appealing glance at the foreman, but the latter's back was toward him, so he seated himself on the powder-can and began to turn the steel.

After a score or so of blows, Bull Davis began to sing:

"My gal done lef' me, O Lawd."

"Shet yer black mouth, ye squalling tarpot!" called Slavin, whose temper was uncertain on wet days; "ye'll need that wind 'fore the job's over."

Davis scowled at the foreman, but ceased singing. Presently a pebble struck his head and he looked up. A tiny rivulet was dribbling down the side of the slope, gradually working its way along a crevice and from time to time washing loose a pebble or a fragment of earth. It had just reached the ledge, and was commencing to soak into the clay around and behind it.

Bull's first impulse was to warn his companions and to ask Slavin's permission to pry the mass loose with a crow-bar; at that moment, however, Big Jim was called away to assist at some other part of the work, and Davis noticed that Henderson appeared to have gone off into a brown study.

He was sitting with his back to the ledge and directly beneath it, with open mouth and half-closed eyes, turning the drill mechanically and apparently without thought of his surroundings.

Bull's eyes dilated, but he made no other sign, and the hammer swung with the same regular motion. Then the water dislodged a good-sized stone which fell into the mud with a splash. Henderson never changed his position, but the others looked uneasily at the ledge. Another stone fell, this one accompanied by a quantity of clay and gravel. Davis swung his hammer with a satisfied grunt;—the crack between the ledge and the slope was perceptibly widening.

Another blow—Clank! Ugh! The ledge was beginning to move:—Clink! Ugh! Clank!—with a shout Davis dropped his hammer and sprang back, barely in time to escape the mass of clay and rock which, with a crackling, grinding, splashing roar, precipitated itself into the cut like a miniature avalanche!

The shovellers stopped and looked up. Slavin ran to the spot.

"What in h—l's this? Whar's Bob?"

"Foh Gawd, Cap'n Slavin, he's under dar," said the black, pointing to the pile of débris. "I holler at him, but he doan jump quick enough."

"Hyar, men, quick!" shouted the foreman. "Dig him out quick, an' play light with yer picks er ye'll finish him! Go to work! Gimme that bar!"

Five minutes of eager, silent work unearthed it. I say "it" advisedly, for his own mother would never have recognized Bob Henderson in the miry, blood-stained mass of rags which lay at their feet crushed and mangled out of human shape so horribly that even the unimaginative foreman shuddered.

"Done fer," he said, solemnly. "It must 'a' jest pinned him agin the drill. Go git a blanket, one o' ye, an' tell the carpenter fer to mek a coffin—an' fer ter mek 'er tight."

Half an hour afterward two stout negroes carried a rude pine box out of the cut and on to the little graveyard in the scrub oaks behind the shanties. Here they

deposited their burden in a shallow grave, and a few of the women sang a hymn over it. That was all.

IV.

"Go to work, men," said the contractor. "Slavin, there's another rock loose just where that one came from. See if you can't knock it down with a bar. Looks as if you'd struck a spring there."

But the men couldn't reach it from above, and below there was no point to act as a fulcrum, so as it seemed tolerably tight, they finally let it alone.

A week drifted by in the usual monotonous way. The light-o'-love Lindy once more changed her affections, and the deserted Davis attempted to assassinate her new choice. The contractor, being within hearing of the row, intervened with a pick-handle, and the assassination was postponed until a more convenient season.

Meanwhile queer tales began to be told of Slavin's Cut. Gray-headed Uncle Billy, the Nestor of the shanties, who was believed to be a "Guinea nigger," and could fix "conjers," declared that on passing the place during a nocturnal expedition, whose object he refused to disclose, he had heard the clink of a drill, and on peering over the slope to ascertain its cause, had beheld Bob Henderson, as in life, sitting on a powder-can and turning steel. Who the striker was, nothing could induce Uncle Billy to say, but the cloven hoof-print of a cow, which had strayed into the cut over-night, caused three of Slavin's best shovellers to quit.

Lem O'Brien, returning from a dance one rainy evening, heard the same sound but saw nothing.

"So," he said, "I jist crossed mesilf wance or twice, and tould Hinderson that Oi was ixtramely aggrivated to have skeered him out av a cool, damp place like the coot, where, no doubt, he was glad to be spending the avening afther passin' the hate o' the day along wid the sthriker they gave him the credit av a wurking wid."

As Uncle Billy was a known exaggerator (to put it mildly), and moreover had been charged with three bottles of stomach-bitters on that particular evening; and as, on the night of his adventure, Lem O'Brien had

reached camp in a condition bordering on the hilarious, the white portion of the force were disposed to be skeptical. The darkies, however, shook their heads solemnly and declared, "Dat ah man doan res' quiet in he grabe,—he wantin' somebody."

Another curious thing was that Bull Davis, hitherto reckless and defiant of God, man, and the devil, should request a transfer to another part of the work, whence he could reach his shanty without passing the scene of the tragedy.

Finally the 'cut was finished, all but the final dressing, and O'Brien's and Henshaw's cart-boys began to use it as a road-way to bring their mules home, saving thereby a steep climb over the hill.

By the time Autumn had set in and darkness began to come before quitting-time, Henderson had been forgotten, and the mules trotted through the cut as gayly by starlight as by day.

"Where's Rabbit, Martin?" asked Alston, one evening, missing one of his long-eared charges from his accustomed stall.

"Not in yet, sir," replied the barn-boss. "That kyaht boy, Joe, is wusser'n tah in Janywary to git his stock in, 'er out either."

"I'll hurry him with a shingle," said Alston. "Here he comes now;—riding like h— was behind him. What do you mean by running your mule like that?"

This as the cart-boy rolled to the ground at his feet, and the mule, with pack and trace-chains rattling like a load of kettles, dashed by him into the stable.

"Oh, Cap'n, I done seen him! I done seen him!"

"Seen who, you black imp? I'll make you see stars if you ever run that mule like that again."

"Oh, Cap'n, he sit dah on he powdah-can an' he say, 'Joe, tell Bull Davis I want him ter strike steel foh me 'morrer night!"

"Hush your fool mouth! If I ever catch you telling any such lies around this camp, I'll wallop you. But the murder's out. Here are half-a-dozen listening to you now. Get up and look after your mules."

"Oh, Cap'n, I'se 'fraid to. 'Deed I is. Hope I'll die

ef he didn' set dar. He settin' dar now, Cap'n, an' you kin heah de steel go clink."

The barn-boss turned the light of his lantern on the boy, and Alston saw at a glance that his terror was unfeigned and awful. His black face had turned to an ashy gray, his eyeballs almost bulged from their sockets, while his white teeth chattered like castanets and his hair made desperate efforts to overcome its natural kinkiness and stand on end.

"Pshaw! the boy's scared limber. Make some of the others curry Rabbit. I'm going to see the ghost myself."

Half-way to the commissary he met Uncle Billy and Big Jim.

"Come along, boys; the ghost's in Slavin's Cut and I'm going to rout him out."

"Cap'n Alston, stay 'way from dah, sah! I wouldn' go in dat cut uv a night, not foh no money," said Uncle Billy, earnestly. Big Jim was of sterner stuff. "Go 'long, you ole fool! I'll go wid you, sah. Henderson was frien' wid me an' you when he live, an' he ain' gwine hu't us nohow, now he daid."

"Well, I'se gwine back to my shack. Dere ain' no 'liance ter be be put in daid peoples, nohow," answered the old man.

Alston and the negro walked steadily toward the cut, which, a quarter of a mile away, gaped in the moonlit hillside like the gateway of the infernal regions.

Within a hundred yards of the grade-point Big Jim suddenly stopped.

"Listen, Cap'n."

Alston paused and listened. From the black depths of the cut came a sound as clear as unmistakable:—the rhythmic clink of a hammer on a drill-head. Alston's curiosity was roused, and he pushed forward again, with Big Jim a rather doubtful second. As they advanced, the sound grew more and more distinct.

"Dat Bull Davis' click, Cap'n," whispered the black, in an awed voice. At the grade-point he halted outright.

"Come on," said the walking-boss.

"Cap'n, I'se 'feahed to," replied the other, with chattering teeth.

"You're a soot-colored coward!" said Alston, striding on into the cut and paying no attention whatever to Big Jim's piteous, "Foh de Lawd's sake, Cap'n, doan leab me."

There was a heavy curve in the line at this point, and Alston was out of sight of his companion before the scene of the accident became visible. When it did, the stout-hearted walking-boss, who more than once had faced, single-handed, an armed and infuriated negro mob, nearly turned tail and ran. Directly on the spot where Bob Henderson had met his death sat the figure of a man!

Alston was no coward, nor was he, like many southern whites of a certain class, superstitious; but the sudden verification of what he had believed to be a lie unmanned him, and for a moment he stared in open-mouthed astonishment at the apparition.

No, it was no mistake. There, on a powder-can, sat a slenderly-built darkey, apparently holding a drill. The figure did not move, but with awful regularity came the "Clink! Clink!" of an unseen hammer.

He braced his nerves and smiled at his own weakness.

"Some trick of the foremen probably. Come out of that, or I'll send a ball into you!"

There was no answer, so, drawing his pistol, he walked directly up to the object. When within an arm's-length he stopped, receded a few paces, then advanced again, looked upward over his shoulder and laughed.

"Pretty good, George Alston, pretty good! For a railroader of eight years' standing to be scared out of his wits by the shadow of a huckleberry-bush. The powder-can's real enough, and the moon behind that bush does the rest. Now let's look for the striker and his hammer."

He was not long in finding it. The water dripping from the side of the cut struck the can with a metallic ring, and the sound, intensified by the echoes of the gloomy place, made to an excited ear a very fair representation of the blow of a sledge.

"Jim, come here! I've caught the ghost," he shouted.

Jim looked cautiously around the side of the slope.

"Come here, I say! What are you afraid of?"

"Wha-what's dat settin' by you, Cap'n?"

"A powder-can, you reprobate. Come here."

With some persuasion Jim was induced to draw nigh and have the phenomenon explained. Then he kicked the powder-can into the middle of the cut, and the hammering stopped.

Big Jim doubled himself up in an ecstasy of pride and mirth.

"Yaw! Yaw!! Yaw!!! WHOOP!!! Who'd a thunk it, Cap'n? All dese fool niggahs skeahed out wid a d— ole powdah-can. Never would 'a' knowed no better ef it hadn' been foh me an' you! We'se de braves' men in de camp, we is! Ain't we, Cap'n? Yaw, yaw, yaw! Dat ole fool, Uncle Billy, got no sense foh all he cunjer, yaw, yaw, whoop!"

But Alston was already at the grade-point on his way back to the stables, and Jim, in spite of his mirth, having no relish for solitude in haunted localities, speedily undoubled and betook himself to the camps, where he swelled and puffed with self-importance and contempt for his comrades until near day, when Uncle Billy rather nonplussed him.

"Heah, you d— niggah, wot mek fun o' yoah bettahs! How cum dat ah can dah? Tell me dat, an' tell me who 'twas speak to dat ah kyaht boy, Joe? Tell me dat, sah! I say 'twar de ole dragon hisse'f wha' done it, an' you can't prove dat 'twa'n't! Dah now, niggah!"

And Jim was bound to admit that he couldn't.

V.

Notwithstanding the outcome of Alston's investigation, opinion was divided among the shanties. The cart-boy, Joe, retold his version of the affair with sundry blood-freezing additions which made a very effective tale of it; and, although several skeptics, chief among whom was big Jim, professed their total unbelief in anything except that Joe had "skeahed hisse'f en'ways wid a hucklebe'y bush," the large majority of

the hands sided with Uncle Billy, received the supernatural message as gospel, and kept scrupulously away from Bull Davis, as a man summonsed by the Evil One.

That individual, although openly scoffing and defiant, was nevertheless troubled with an uneasiness foreign to his surly nature, and, after putting in half a day in his cut, declared his intention of quitting the works. Accordingly he went to his shanty and made a roll of the ragged blankets which constituted his domestic "menage," secreting therein Yaller May's new frying-pan and a pair of overalls belonging to Big Jim.

Then he went down to the commissary and cashed what time-checks he had, trading out the checks of the current month, on which no money would be due until the following twentieth, for supplies for his trip (viz: Five bottles of bitters, a pound of bacon, a red necktie, ten pistol-cartridges, a pair of boots, three cans of sardines, and two dozen ginger-cakes.)

The men were in from work before his preparations were completed, and the moon was shining in the eastern sky when he finally shouldered his bundle and turned into the path which, skirting the camps, led to the highway.

As he passed the spring which supplied the shanties, he threw down his bundle and stooped to drink. Presently he lifted his head;—some one was coming down the path from the shanties:

"My gal done lef' me, O Lawd!"

Bull recognized the voice. It was Lindy coming after the night's supply of water. She started on seeing him, and then, without speaking, filled her bucket and turned to go.

"Lindy," he said, softly. "I'se gwine away."

"Go 'long den," she answered, airily. "Deh ain' no string tied to ye."

"You'se gwine wid me, chile."

"No, I ain' needer, yo black niggah, you! I'se berry well off wha' I is."

"Lindy, come wid me. I luvs you; 'deed I does, an'

I'll treat ye a sight better 'n dat saddle-colored, flop-eahed rascal eber kin."

"Ya-as, I'se done tried yoah treatin', an' I doan like it."

"Dat's good foh you to say, an' de pistol I guv ye in yoah belt now."

"Take yoah ole pistol, I doan wan' it! 'Twon't shoot straight noways,' and she flung the weapon on the ground at his feet.

Bull stooped and picked it up.

"It used ter," he said, fumbling with the lock. "Ain't ye gwine wid me, Lindy?"

"I done tole ye I warn't," retorted the damsel, turning to go.

"Den yo'se done goin', foh good an' all," he shouted—and he levelled and fired. A minute later an excited crowd was on the spot. Lindy lay on the ground, straining her lungs to the utmost. "Bull Davis done shot me," she shrieked.

"Wha he?" demanded a dozen voices.

"Run in de bushes laike rabbit. O Lawdy! Lawdy! I'se done killed. I know I is."

"Making too much noise to be seriously hurt," said the contractor, running up. "Yes, as I thought, skin hardly raised. Who did it, Alston?"

"Bull Davis, sir, as near as I can learn."

"They're after him, I see, and on a hot trail too," as the pistols began to flash among the undergrowth. "Let's take a hand."

VI.

Torn by briers, tripped by fallen logs, throttled and impeded by vines and tangled brush, Bull Davis tore across the flat like a buffalo through a jungle. The bullets which whizzed in every direction gave him little concern, for he felt sure that he was as yet unseen by his pursuers. His plan was to wear them out at the start by leading them through the roughest country he could find, and then to outrun them at his leisure. Presently on the open hillside ahead he saw a flying shadow dash by, and recognized Black Peter, the con-

tractor's horse, with that individual on his back. A moment later Alston tore past on a mule.

The game was up. He could never dodge those two in the open, and behind him the thicket was swarming with foes of his own race.

Once the idea occurred to him to face about and shoot his way through the mob behind, but an innate hankering after life decided him not to.

Slackening his pace, he crawled carefully through the thicket until he reached the edge of the right of way, and not fifty yards to his left, black in the moonlight, yawned the mouth of Slavin's Cut. If he could reach that unseen, it would be an easy matter to slip through it and into the big woods beyond. Once there he was safe.

Dropping into the berm ditch at the edge of the fill, he wriggled along like a snake toward the grade-point. A few high weeds and a bush or two favored him, and in about two minutes he rose to his feet in the shadow of the slope.

Before he had taken a dozen steps, he stopped and a startled oath escaped him, for, clear and distinct above the clamor of the chase behind, he heard a familiar sound, the ring of a striker's hammer!

Just then a random bullet struck the rocks above his head and glanced along the side of the cut, striking fire as it went. Thinking he had been seen, he plunged desperately forward, and before he realized it was within twenty feet of the haunted spot. Lifting his head as the sound of the hammer rang out again, he stopped short, horror-stricken!

Directly in front of him, as he had last seen him a moment before the slide took place on that fatal afternoon, sat Bob Henderson! His head was bent forward, with the mouth open and the eyes half-closed, and Bull, in a dazed way, seemed to recognize the ragged blue shirt and the red neckerchief that the dead man had worn.

As he gazed, the figure lifted its head and glared at him with dead, yellow eyeballs, and now—O horrors!—its dead lips parted in a ghastly grin, displaying the

glistening teeth, and the grave-stiffened arm seemed to beckon him toward it!

Bull tried to pray—to shriek—to swear—to make some noise which would bring the grade-hands upon him, but his parched lips refused to emit a sound, and the noise of the human pursuit was drifting farther away, while some horrible fascination seemed to be drawing him closer to the ghastly figure that glowered at him from the shadow of the slope.

Step by step he drew nearer, and all the while struggling with his whole might to turn and run, to fall down, to do something——

He tried to use his pistol, but the cylinder of the weapon refused to revolve. Two steps more would bring him within touching distance of the Thing. One—he gathered himself for a last despairing effort—when it suddenly rose to its feet. There was a slight cracking, grating sound, a sudden crushing pain as if a sledge-hammer had smitten his temples—then darkness.

. . . . . .

VII.

"Slavin," said O'Brien, as the two walked home together at dusk one day in the following week, "it's domded queerious that that Bull should hev been found jist where Hinderson wur kilt last Summer—an' the topknot av him busted in wid a chunk o' rock that looked loike it moight hev sthuck to the slope till the keows kim home siveral toimes. Don't ye know, me lad, I always half-suspicted that Bull could ha' got Bob out if he'd hollered in toime. The naygurs do be a saying that the ghost, ur whativer it wur that made the clinking noise, wanted somebody, an' whin he got him, he lift. Ye don't hear the noise in the coot now. Domded queerious, ain't it?"

Slavin stared at him a moment, and agreed that it was.

The blithesome "Ellen" reads a lesson to all pretty young widows in this amusing story. It is by Elizabeth W. Champney.

ELLEN'S MERRY MOURNING.

No one who had driven through the lodge-gate and had noticed the merry face of Ellen the gate-keeper would be likely soon to forget it. She usually wore a pink calico dress, which was always scrupulously neat and fitted her trim figure to a T. Her ribbons were pink, her cheeks were pink, and the children declared that her hair was pink also. It was really a very pretty shade of light red, and it crinkled in a bewitching way. What a charming picture she made, framed by the arched window, the gray stone covered closely with luxuriant ivy! She was always smiling, and had a gay word of repartee for her fellow-servants: a deferential but cheerful greeting for her superiors; jokes and amusing stories for the children; and when all alone she sang the jolliest Irish songs and ballads, with a laughing lilt in her voice, which was so irresistible that the guests at the villa often sat for hours on the veranda, where, unknown to her, they could hear Ellen sing. Altogether she was the most light-hearted, merry little woman you ever saw, and we were all surprised to see her appear on Sunday in full widows' weeds. We met her just returning from church, and remarked on the exuberance of health and spirit displayed by the sable-robed figure, though we did not at first recognize it. Through the folds of the heavy crape veil I saw a glint of the red-gold hair, and there was something in her buoyant step which recalled the measure of those lilting choruses. I believe she was thinking them over and keeping time to their beat and swing as she walked. I suspected at once that this was no ordinary widow bowed down by a heavy weight of woe, and when O'Flaherty, the coachman, turned on his box and threw her a kiss as we passed, we also turned and saw the crape veil

thrown back and Ellen's rosy face framed by a coquettish widow's cap.

"Is Ellen in grief?" I asked.

"Not at all," my hostess answered, laughing; "she is only in deep mourning and enjoys it very much."

"Some distant relative, I presume, who has left her money?"

"On the contrary, it is in honor of her husband, to whom she was very tenderly attached, and for whom she has resisted the most persistent attentions of lovers through two long years of widowhood. Is it not so, O'Flaherty?"

The privileged coachman coughed and chuckled. "It's about so, mum," he admitted.

"Ellen a widow!" I exclaimed. "Why, she is the merriest jade I ever saw. You are talking in riddles; will you be kind enough to explain your meaning?"

"Ellen must tell you," my friend replied, and that afternoon I strolled down to the lodge intent on unravelling the mystery. Ellen wore a neat black sateen, flecked with a tiny white figure resembling snow-flakes. Muslin cuffs were folded back from her wrists in the most approved style, and the specks of rubber earrings in her rosy ears were matched by a spot of court plaster on her dimpled chin; English violets and a black folded handkerchief were tucked in her belt. Ellen was evidently still sustaining her character as a bewitching little widow. We had had some previous conversation, and I soon made an opportunity of telling her that I was sorry to hear of her bereavement.

"Oh, yes, mum," she admitted, "I felt very bad intirely—for a spell. It's a dreadful thing, mum, to lose one's husband, and I hope you will never suffer the likes."

I felt not a little indignant at Ellen's show of grief, for the minx looked so complacent in her widow's weeds that I was sure that whatever she might have suffered was more than made up to her by a sense of their becomingness. I fancied, too, that as I entered the lodge, I had seen O'Flaherty, the coachman, sneak out of the back-door, and I could not help saying rather spitefully:

"Time brings consolations, Ellen, and I should not be surprised if you married a second time."

A look of real pain and indignation came into Ellen's face. "Niver, mum. Do you think I could marry anyone else but my own Terry! Shure, it's mistaken you are, the saints forgive you! Why, we niver quarrelled but once, and that was the day I lost him. It's many's the bitter tear I've shed for that."

I saw that Ellen was in earnest, and felt that I did not quite understand this odd mixture of loyalty and vanity. "Tell me about it," I said, as kindly as I could. "How did you lose your husband?"

"It was this way, mum," Ellen explained. "When we were first married, I was waitress at the house, an' Terence was under-gardener, an' oh, mum, we were that happy an' comfortable until the misthress' sister came to spend the summer here, an' brought a peck of misery for us in all thim Sarah-togy thrunks of hers, bad luck to her! Mrs. Delacey her name was, a stoilish young widder, who never wasted many tears on her husband, but made up for that with her bumbazines or her grinny-dines, the Chany crapes you could pull through a gould ring; an' the silky, slinky stuff they call foolhardy."

"Foolhardy? I never heard of any such material, Ellen. I have it! You must mean foulard."

"Well, be it fool hard or fool soft, I know not. I only know that she made a fool of ivery man that came nigh her, the craythur! an' I was as foolish as a man over her gowns. I unpacked her dresses for her, an' hung 'em up in the closets, an' all that avenin' I was goin' on to Terence about thim gowns till I misthrust he was sick of hearin' me, for he answered me cross-like. You know how men is, mum, the misthress tells me you have a husband yourself. Well, I niver took no warnin', but kept on tellin' him how the butler tould me that whin Mrs. Delacey wore her black Brussels net, with the black pearls on her snowy neck, at the Vanderbilts' ball, the Juke of what's-his-name he says, 'Who is that raquiem in lace?' says he, 'shinin' out like a snow-flake forninst a chimney-stack.'

"'What's a raquiem?' says Terry. 'It's a song they sing at a wake,' says I, 'an' the Juke said it must be very flatterin' to her husband to know that such a lovely young craythur was mournin' for him in such foine style. Mournin' is becomin',' says I, 'I'd like to wear it myself. It must be a great consolation to a widder. If you should die, Terry,' says I, 'I wouldn't spare the money on black stuff for you.'

"'You'd be glad enough for the chance,' says he, 'an' that stuck-up butler, too. Niver you let me hear you speak of him agin, or it's the four eyes of you both that I'll put in mournin',' says he.

"It was the butler, mum, that made the throuble betwixt us more than the mournin'. The misthress niver would have had a man in the house doin' woman's work, but Mrs. Delacey she brought him from the city along with her new-fangled fashions, an' shure he needed more waitin' on than any of the aristocracy, orderin' round the other servants an' drivin' the cook wild wid the French dishes he was always a-suggestin'. But mind you, he didn't order me at all, at all. Quite contrairy, the villain, he was always blarneyin' me hair an' me eyes, an' sayin' as how he would like to see me in one of Mrs. Delacey's dresses, for he was sure I would be purtier in it than her leddyship herself. An' whither it was that he axed his misthress for me I don't know, but what did Mrs. Delacey do but give me one of her old black gowns. Now, though I was dyin' to see myself in it, I was that feared of Terry that I didn't dare put it on, until one day it happened that the masther sent him to Jerome Park with one of the horses, an' he was to be gone three days, an' as good luck would have it, my third cousin's wife had just died, so av coorse I had the opportunity I wanted of wearin' the black dress to the funeral. Now whin we started for the buryin', who should I see at the door with the masther's buggy but the butler. 'An' will you ride with me, Ellen?' says he. 'Shure I've come all the way to take you, seein' I knew Terry was away,' says he.

"'Oh,' says I, 'I'm not goin' to the buryin',' says I,

for I didn't like to ride with him at all, at all. 'Thin let me take you home,' says he, 'for it's a good piece to the villa, an' you're tired with footin' it here.'

"I'll not be afther goin' home just yet,' says I. 'I'll stay wid the childer an' get supper against my cousin comes home from the cimetrary,' says I, thinkin' that with that he would be off without me. But this was the very worst thing I could have done, for he just waited around, the craythur, an' with the people bein' late back from the buryin', an' insistin' that I should stay to supper, it was near dark whin I started for home. An' there was the butler a-waitin' for me, but I wouldn't ride with him, but just took my cousin's eldest boy for company, an' cut through the pine woods a short way. But, as bad luck would have it, I came out on the highway an' sent the boy back just afther the butler, who had driven round by the road an' had stopped at every saloon on the way, passed by, so that he drove through the lodge gate not two minutes before I came home, an' who should sit there but Terry, lookin' as black as a thunder-cloud.

"Well, I was surprised enough to see him, an' he saw it.

"'So I've caught you,' says he, 'you've been ridin' with the butler,' an' the more I denied it, the madder he got. 'An' what do you mane by dressin' yourself up like a widdy?' says he. 'If you want to be a widdy, it's not I that will be hinderin' you.'

"With that he took his hat, an' he left the lodge. It had looked like rain all the day, an' there came on a fearful storm in the night, an' I dared not put foot outside the house, thinkin' he'd come back in the mornin'. But when two days went by, an' he niver came, the masther came to the lodge to see where he was, an' there was great huntin' an' searchin' for him in all the neighborhood. All we could find was that he had taken a little boat to row across the bay, an' most likely the squall had overturned it, for it was found floatin' far out, bottom upward, but Terry or his body we never found.

"Thim were the sorrowfulest days o' my life, mum.

The misthress was very kind to me, an' come often to see me an' wanted me to stay all the time at the house, instead of spendin' my nights so lonely at the lodge. But I wouldn't do it, for I thought maybe Terry was not dead, after all, an' if he came back some avenin', he should find the windy lighted an' the supper waitin'.

"'My poor Ellen,' says the misthress, 'don't disave yourself, for he is dead for sure an' certain.'

"In my heart I was near belavin' her, but I kept up courage on the outside until the end of the summer, whin the family wint away to the city, an' left the place all lonely for the winter. The butler called last of all, bringin' with him a great bundle.

"'This came by express for you from New York,' says he.

"I cut the string, an' I saw it was a parcel of black gowns.

"'Whoiver sint these to me?' says I. 'Belike it is Mrs. Delacey,' says the butler. 'She wint down to New York a week ago,' says he.

"With that I burst out cryin' an' tied thim up again, and tould him to carry thim back to his misthress.

"'You can't belave that Terry is still livin',' says he. 'An' you ought to do him the dacent thing by dressin' as a widdy ought. A great consolation you'll find it,' says he, 'an' I'll put a weed in my own hat to show my respect.'

"'An' how do I know that I am a widdy? Shure it's not the likes of you, Dinnis O'Leary, that will make me belave he's dead,' says I.

"'Shure, who will you belave?' says he. 'It's not me alone, but the whole community says he's dead.'

"'I'll not belave any one but Terry,' says I. 'Not till Terry himself tells me that he's dead will I belave myself a widdy.'

"'Sure, I niver before wished the appayrence of a ghost,' says the butler, 'but here's to the speedy comin' of the sperrit, Mrs. Terry, an' whin next summer comes, I thrust I may find you settin' your pretty cheeks off with a crape veil like a raysonable Christian resigned to the doin's of Providence.'

"With that he took himself and the bundle off, an' it was a long an' lonesome winter spent in the little lodge, with no neighbors but the dairyman and his family, who stayed to take care of the cows, for the other servants had gone to the city with the family. I earned some money helpin' make the butter, an' I was puttin' it by whin I heard that Terry's ould feyther and mither were to be sent to the poor-house, an' I had thim brought to the lodge, an' I nursed the ould feyther to his grave, an' the ould mither back to her health again. Thin the spring came, but I can't say that I was glad to see it, for I knew that the family would come back, an' the butler, an' that he would be afther botherin' me again. An' bother me he did, an' so did the whole parish, for first he sent a stone-cutter man to me to put up a grave-stone to Terry, an' the praste himsel' tould me that I ought to be havin' prayers said to get him out of Purgatory, an' the tavern-keeper brought me a bill that Terry had been runnin' up unbeknownst to me for whiskey, an' I saw that it began from the time that the butler came to the villa, an' like as not it was because of the throuble betwixt us. An' while I was castin' about in my mind which I should pay first, the tavern-keeper or the praste, and how I should get the money to pay either, comes the butler again—an', 'Mrs. Terry,' says he, 'shure it's little we all see you care for your husband's mimory, or you wouldn't grudge him the bit crape that tells of mournin'. Thim that mourns shall be comforted, but maybe it's right you are, for faith Terry was not worth the grievin'.'

"With that I grew angry. 'An',' says I, 'it's none of *your* comfortin' I want in any case, Dinnis O'Leary, an' what nade have I to shpend on the mournin' whin my heart is in crape for him all the day long, an' it's better I should save his credit in this wurrld an' the nixt by payin' his debts an' the toll rates from Purgatory than shpendin' on my own dressin'.'

"With that the craythe saw that hope had well nigh lift me, an' says he, 'What's the need of your slavin' in this way, Mrs. Terry? Teddy had his life insured in your favor, an' there's a matter of six hundred dollars

awaitin' your call, which will clear off all debts, an' lave you a rich widdy. An' what's the money got to do with your dressin', ayther? For here is this bundle of black dresses, which Mrs. Delacey did not send you at all, at all, for by the same token she knows nothin' about thim.'

"'Thin *you* bought thim yourself,' says I, 'an' it's not I that will be afther acceptin' such a prisent from you.'

"But he denied it by all the saints, an' left the bundle in the door, an' I put it on the top shelf in the closet, I still mistrustin' that he had bought thim himsel', an' that the truth would out at last. Well, thin, I considered an' considered the matter of the insurance, but whin I thought that if I had to shwear, as the butler said I must, to get the money, that to the best of my belafe an' wish that Terry was dead to all intints and purposes, dead for sure an' all, wid no hope of any resurrection, so far as this wurrld was concerned, it seemed to me that I was sellin' the bit of hope that I had lived all these months on, an' I couldn't do it. So, how I don't know, but that summer I lived through, an' a woful one it was. I paid Terry's debts, an' I had the masses said, an' I was considerin' an iligant marble shtone for the buryin'-ground, the which I meant to have earned to pay for by New Year's, for the misthress had lift me plenty of work to do. Whin a gurl in Ireland, the nuns had taught me to embroider an' to mark linen, an' the misthress had lift me a pile of sheets an' pilly-cases an' napkens an' towels to work her monygram on, an' pleasant it was to sit by the foire wid the ould mither an' think that with every letther I was makin' I was payin' for the cuttin' of another on Terry's tombstone. An' I determined not to stint the epytaph, but to give him a good long one, settin' down all his vartues, an' it should read somethin' like this:

"'HERE LIES THE BODY OF
TERRY O'FLAHERTY.
Which is not buried here, havin' niver
been found, he havin' been cap-
sized one dark night in
a wherry.'

"(It was more like a dory, but I said 'wherry' for the poetry.)

"'He was the kindest an' best of husbands an' fellows, barrin' a bit quick-tempered an' a thrifle jealous. His widdy erects this monyment as a New Year's prisent to testify her woe, an' that she will never belave him dead till he comes an' tells her so.'

"It was a beautiful idea, but I niver had the monyment put up, the raison bein' that one night, as I worked by the fire, an' the ould mither nodded in the chair, I see a face at the windy, an' I held out my arms at it an' called, 'Terry, Terry!' an' fainted dead away, an' whin I came to my right sinses, an' was wonderin' whether it was Terry's ghost come to tell me I was a widdy, I felt myself held in his two strong arms, an' by the same token I knew it was Terry himself.

"Well, we laughed, an' we cried, an' we hugged each other, an' we went nearly crazy intirely, an' he tould me how it was wild he was the night he wint away, an' how he had rowed out to a sailin'-vessel that was bound to Calcutty by the way of the Cape of Good Hope, determined for to lave me free to be a widdy, if I loiked; but how that the ould love an' the longin' were too strong for him intirely, an' he set out to come back again, but was detained by a matter of two or three shipwricks, an' so he had not touched shore till that very mornin'. An' how all the way he had been tormented wid the fear that I might have belaved him dead an' have married the butler, an' so he had bethought him that he would look in at the windy, an' if he saw me dressed in black, he would belave me still a widdy an' come; but whin he saw me in pink, it near took his sinses away, for he thought sure I had done mournin' for him, an' how he was about to turn away whin I saw him an' called him, an' thin come in he had to, right through the sash of the windy, even were it to murther the butler.

"'But how is it,' says Terry, 'that you've not been doin' me the respect of wearin' black for me as a widdy should, an' mournin' so becomin' to you?' says he.

"'Whisht, Terry,' says the ould mither, 'what money had she to buy mournin'? whin she's been buryin' your feyther, an' payin' my docther, an' your tavern bills, an' the praste for prayin' you out of Purgatory, let alone the iligant new tombstone she was preparin' for a New Year's prisent,' says she.

"'A New Year's prisent!' says Terry, 'an' I in such a hurry to come home that divil a bit of a prisent did I bring her but mysel'. Did you niver get the iligant gowns I sint you from New York? The ship put in there before we set out on our voyage, an' I thought what a pleasure you would take intirely wid wearin' of the weeds.'

"'Oh, Terry!' says I, 'an' was it you that sint them? I thought they were from the butler, an' here they've been lyin' all the time, for niver a rag of them would I put on at all, at all.'

"With that he had me put on one of the dresses, an' he said it was too bad I should have deprived myself of one of the privileges of my widdyhood whin I had the chance, especially as he was now convinced that this was the *only* privilege I cared for, an' now his comin' home must not be the slightest hindrance to my pleasure, an' I must wear them for his sake, as they were the only New Year's prisent he had for me.

"An' when I came to consider, it seemed only right an' proper I should do so, for shure no man deserved more to be mourned for, an' here was a matter of nearly two years, when I ought to have mourned for him, that I didn't, an' shure hadn't I given my word to the butler that I would wear mournin' for Terry when Terry himself came back an' tould me to?

"So that is the explanation of the whole conundrum, an' you may ask Terry himself if it isn't a merry mournin' to him as well as to me."

"Shure, mum, it's that same," said Terence O'Flaherty, and the coachman, who had lounged into the lodge in time to hear the last part of the recital, took his little wife upon his knee and, imprinting a rousing smack on her rosy cheek, added,—"an' it's not permitted to every man to have the pleasure of consolin' his own widdy."

It is said that women cannot really love each other. This is disproved by every day's experience; but here is a story which might reasonably be true, and which describes a sacrifice made by one woman for another. It was the hardest kind of a sacrifice, too. The story is anonymous and appeared in *London Society*.

FRIENDS.

I.

An artist, longing for some touch of life to vivify a woodland scene, would probably have said that, amid much that was fair, there was naught fairer than Mabel Carr herself. And yet, when I have told you that her eyes were of the same deep blue as the violets at her feet, and that her hair was of that shade with which the mediæval painters loved to depict the flowing locks of their angels, I know I have not made you understand in the least how beautiful Mabel really was. It would strike you sometimes as realizing your conception of a perfect angel face; sometimes it would appeal to you with all the winsome artlessness that makes a child's features fair, while child face and angel face alike were ever pervaded with an expression of the most genuine womanliness.

Mabel remained so still that the little woodland creatures, taking heart of grace, passed her by with no more fear than if, as she sat there in her white Spring dress, she had been a statue hewn in marble.

Suddenly, however, there came a change. There was a rush, a scuffle, a flutter, and all the happy, frisking animals were out of sight. Only Mabel Carr sat still, heedless of the approaching step, hardly less so when a soft hand was laid upon her shoulder.

"Ah, it's you!" she said, without looking round or changing her attitude; and the tone in which she spoke was expressive of placid content, as if her companion's presence was just what she had been expecting—was just what she needed to complete the pleasure of the moment.

There was in the aspect of the new-comer more of gravity than seemed quite in keeping with the gay brilliancy of the surrounding scene; this, however, was mainly attributable to the fact that she was dressed in mourning. Her face, though neither so beautiful nor so winning as that of Mabel Carr, was perhaps more striking. Its essential characteristic was strength. As she stood behind Mabel, her darker coloring, her sombre dress, the more settled expression of her countenance, might have suggested a shade to the picture of which Mabel was the light; but it was a pleasant reposeful shade. She was older than Mabel by some five or six years, and she had thought out her conclusions deeper under the guidance of a longer experience.

They were not sisters, these two, and Victoria Lacy was a widow. She had been married when quite young, less from any strong attachment than from a sense of duty, and because others had told her it would be well for her to marry. Her short married life had not been at all unhappy; and yet, when she recovered from the first shock of her husband's sudden death, she was able to accept her widowhood with no sense of an overwhelming anguish. Her life, however, was lonely, more particularly as her husband's relations were not congenial to her, and she had none of her own to whom she could turn in her solitude. Then she came across Mabel Carr, and they formed a mutual friendship, as women *can* and *do*, in spite of the incredulity sometimes expressed to the contrary. Mabel was an orphan; she was of an age to act as she pleased; she had a sufficiently strong will to know what and whom she liked, and she possessed a fortune of her own large enough to make her independent. Therefore, when the proposal came from Victoria that they—each loving the other, and both lonely—should make their home together, Mabel accepted it with joy; her admiration for her friend and her belief in her were boundless. The bargain was struck, and neither had ever had any cause to repent it.

"I came to see how you are getting on," said Victoria, picking up the despised sketch.

"I'm afraid I've sadly wasted my time," said Mabel.

"I've done but a poor morning's work, as you may see, in spite of every advantage."

"I don't know, Mab; I suspect the time has been less wasted than you think. These kind of mornings seem to say to me: Do nothing; be placidly happy; exist simply, and dream. Don't you think so?"

Victoria moved round a little and seated herself on a fallen trunk, whence she had a view of Mabel's face. Mabel did not answer. If she had been dreaming before, her friend's presence did not seem to wholly dispel the dream. Thus they both sat silent awhile, soothed by the buzzing of the insects and the singing of the birds. At length, however, Mabel roused herself.

"Are we going to sit here all day?" she asked, with a lazy smile.

"I shouldn't mind," was the answer; "it is so warm and delicious, and all so pretty to look at. Do you know I was just thinking that, if ever you have your picture painted—which you promised me long ago, remember—you ought to be taken just as you are, here among the wild-flowers, white frock, straw hat, and all —a veritable Queen Mab in your own kingdom."

"And do you know what I was thinking?" said Mabel. "That this is the month of May, and the London season is in full swing, and that, although it is very beautiful here, I honestly prefer London at this time of the year. Very prosaic thoughts, weren't they, compared with yours?"

A momentary expression of self-reproach crossed Victoria Lacy's brow. It must have struck her that with so fair a face Mabel had a claim to find her kingdom elsewhere than amid the woodland flowers. Then she said:

"You are right, dear, and I wish with all my heart it could be managed; but——" She paused, and Mabel said quickly:

"But you don't see the fun of it yourself quite so much as you used; otherwise, my sweet, the thing could be managed at once."

"Not exactly, Mab," said the other gently and in perfect good-humor.

"I don't *like* having to shut myself up when I might be seeing my friends."

"Well, but now look here," said Mabel, with the air of one propounding an incontrovertible argument, "you, who are generally so reasonable, and have such a contempt for doing things to the letter, why are you so inconsistent? You didn't care for your mother-in-law, you know you didn't; so why should you go through the affectation of pretending to mourn?"

"That is quite true," replied Victoria. "I was not fond of her; she was not particularly kind to me, and she was not, I think, a woman whom it was easy for any one to love; but I have the greatest respect for my two sisters-in-law, and I wouldn't for the world do anything which might be misconstrued by them as unbecoming or unfeeling, or as wanting in a proper respect."

Mabel shrugged her shoulders and made an expressive little motion with her lips.

"Of course," she said, "I know that when once you take a thing seriously into your head, it's not the least use trying to make you change. But *couldn't* we go, if only for a week or two—quite in a quiet way, you know—just to see the pictures and to hear the opera, if for nothing else?"

"It *is* hard upon you, Mab," said Victoria, as she parted the golden threads on the girl's forehead. "We'll see if some arrangement can be made. With all your many friends it surely can't be very difficult to manage."

"Oh, I don't want to go without *you!*" said Mabel, jumping up quickly. "You needn't think I'm so selfish as all that! If you *are* bound to stay here, of course I don't want to make it harder for you than it is."

And she turned up the pathway that led out of the wood. There was a sharpness in her tone which told that her feelings—and perhaps her temper, too—were just a little ruffled. Suddenly Mabel said:

"Have you any real belief in women's friendships?"

"I have, indeed," Victoria replied, with calm emphasis. "I believe the capacity for friendship to be as strong in a woman as in a man, and I think it is a cruel

thing to try and sneer a woman out of this belief, as some people do. For just think, if a woman cannot enjoy the close friendship of a woman as a man does with a man, she is deprived altogether of one of the sweetest pleasures, one of the completest consolations in life."

"But don't you think we women are more jealous of each other?" said Mabel, naïvely.

"Ah," replied Victoria, "under certain circumstances many a woman's friendship does end in bitter quarrel, I know; but given corresponding circumstances, would any man's friendship stand the test better? I doubt it."

"How far do you think friendship would carry one?" asked Mabel, in a tone between jest and earnest. "What would *you* do for *me*, dearie? Would you die for me?"

"I hope so, Mab, if it had to come to that," was the answer, with a smile.

"Well, it isn't very likely to come to that, fortunately, in these days, is it? What else would you do for me, more within the bounds of possibility?"

"Ah, it is so easy to say till one is tried," replied Victoria; "but I think, my darling—nay, I am sure—I would live for you."

Did it strike Victoria Lacy at that moment that to live for those we love may sometimes be even a harder trial than to lay down life for their sake?

II.

Whether Victoria Lacy really took any steps toward procuring for Mabel the wished-for visit to London, or whether circumstances shaped themselves from without independently of any co-operation from within, it needs not to relate in detail here. One thing, however, is certain. Not many days after that bright Spring morning so pleasantly spent in the woods, Mabel received from some cousins in London an invitation to pay them a visit of a few weeks, if Mrs. Lacy would consent to be parted from her for so long.

Something in the tone of this invitation, which, while it distinctly excluded Victoria, seemed to imply that Mabel's natural place should be among those of her

own blood, jarred upon the girl, and her first impulse was to decline it.

Every one knew that where the one went the other went too; her cousins ought at least to have had the civility to ask Victoria; if they didn't choose to notice her friend, she was quite sure she didn't wish them to notice *her*, and, above all, she couldn't think of leaving Victoria to mope by herself in the country. All of which was not in the least affectation on her part. Her frame of mind was perfectly genuine at the moment, only it was capable of modification under a slight pressure of persuasion, which Victoria Lacy understood how to apply.

So the upshot of it all was that Mabel accepted her cousins' invitation; and by the time the day of her departure arrived, her view of the whole matter had so far undergone a change that she could look upon herself as almost more to be pitied than Victoria, in that the latter could take their separation with such apparent indifference. Her very last words as they parted were:

"Good-by, you dear thing! I wish you were coming to help me to enjoy it! I know I sha'n't half care for it without you; and as for *you*, I don't believe you'll miss *me* one bit!"

"She is so selfish," some one once said, in accusation of Mabel Carr. To which Victoria had replied, with the calm decisiveness of manner that no one ever dreamed of contradicting:

"No; she has naturally very warm feelings, and she expects a great deal from those she loves. But she is not selfish; no, not in the very least."

So she smiled away any momentary annoyance at those parting words. Yet I think she must have experienced something of sadness, too, as she realized how seldom is any sacrifice or any trial—great or small—appreciated at its full value. For no one enjoyed society more than she, no one liked seclusion less; and she had accepted it in this instance solely out of consideration for what was due to others; while she had let Mabel go with no lamentations, not because she should not feel her absence acutely, but because she was deter-

mined to utter no word which could prompt Mabel to reverse her decision and forego her amusement. And Mabel's last words had been genuinely expressive of her feelings. Her pleasure in her visit to London was only half-hearted. Her admiration for Victoria, her love for her, her sympathy with her, made it impossible for Mabel to believe that she could extract the fullest satisfaction out of any enjoyment which her friend did not share. At the same time her own intense desire to be as fully appreciated in return made her overlook the true motive of her friend's conduct. The thought uppermost in her mind was, not that Victoria was cheerfully and uncomplainingly accepting solitude in the country so as to make her the freer to go, but that she seemed able to part from her with apparently so little regret, and faulty though the feeling might be in the abstract, it yet grew out of some of the best impulses of her nature.

Mabel, as she sat in the train, and meditated on her visit to her cousins, was naturally led into the reflection that it was very kind of them to think of her, and it could have done her no sort of good to have been informed that the invitation had been given mainly on interested ground.

The Lefroys' home was in London. They had a comfortable house and a numerous acquaintance, but they lived well up to their income, principally derived from a Government appointment occupied by Mr. Lefroy, and, with a family of four sons and one daughter, there was not much to look to as a provision for the future. Three of the sons were doing well in different professions in various parts of the world; but Hubert, the youngest—one of those attractive, popular, clever creatures, who might do anything and invariably do nothing—was his mother's darling, and Hubert must marry a woman with money.

"Of course, I wouldn't ask *any* one," said Mrs. Lefroy to her husband; "but Mabel—a cousin and all—it's so perfectly natural to have her as a companion for Gertrude; and she has a very comfortable fortune. I really consider it *quite* providential that Mrs. Lacy should be

in mourning this year. Of course, if she had not been, they would have come to town together; for she has got Mabel *completely* under her finger and thumb, and Mabel is positively silly about her. Those kind of infatuations are much better broken through as soon as possible; and, anyhow, it is an opportunity not to be lost."

It is not always that a mother's arrangements with reference to her son's matrimonial future find favor in his eyes; but in this case, Mrs. Lefroy being cautious enough to keep her designs to herself, matters took their own course. Had Mabel's attractions rested solely on her fortune, the business might have been harder to manage. Hubert Lefroy, younger son though he was, and with nothing but a slender portion to look to, was nevertheless not at all inclined to give mere money the foremost place in his calculations. His cousin Mabel, however, whom he had not seen since they were both children, had that about her which appealed to him far more strongly than if she had possessed a hundred thousand pounds. With her deep-blue eyes and her sweet mobile expression and her halo of golden hair, "What can a man want more," thought Herbert, "to live with and look at day after day? This is the woman for me to marry," was the decision he arrived at almost as soon as he saw her. So he fell in love with her at first sight.

Perhaps hardly any man, having singled out a woman as the peculiar object of his love, is acutely troubled by the thought of any insuperable difficulty in the way of his winning her. Certainly the circumstances and the surroundings of Hubert Lefroy's existence had not been of a kind to place any such reflection prominently before him. He was accustomed to be appreciated, beloved, believed in. He was one of those men who are attractive to persons of all ages and to men and women alike. His countenance, especially when he smiled, was singularly pleasing, and was in itself sufficient to win the hearts of some; others were captivated by his manners; while for those who sought something deeper, something more permanent, there was plenty of keen intelligence and playful humor, with a capacity, too,

for calm and concentrated thought. Only a close student of human nature would have detected that Hubert Lefroy was deficient in that kind of strength which is implied by constancy and consistent conduct.

Mabel Carr, however, possessed no subtle perceptions of this sort. She was open to the full impression of that concentrated effort to please her alone with which he appealed to her heart. She was fascinated by his mere smile, so tender and so sympathetic; while she could appreciate his devotion all the more that she could recognize in him one of a refined and educated mind who had thought much for himself, and had the faculty of commanding attention from others. And there was nothing about him, either in his behavior toward herself or toward other people, to raise a suspicion of any weakness in her hero; nor, with so much that was excellent and attractive laid at her feet, was it indeed likely that Mabel would be quick to detect such flaws as there were in his character. Some people said he was indolent. Perhaps he might be, but that was merely, she thought, because he had not yet found the special work for which he was best fitted. Others accused him of selfishness.

"If he is not perfection," thought Mabel, "he is as near it as I am ever likely to find."

Thus, by the time her visit had lasted a fortnight, Mabel Carr and Hubert Lefroy were as much in love with one another as even Mrs. Lefroy herself could have wished.

III.

The violets had been in bloom when Mabel left the country; it was the time of roses when she returned. She had parted from her friend with a promise to write frequently, and during the first week of her absence the promise was faithfully kept. Then came days of silence, followed at intervals by little notes scribbled in great haste, with the assurance of a long letter next day, which often never came. Meanwhile the fortnight extended to a month, and the month was fast becoming six weeks, ere Mabel suggested returning home. Vic-

toria Lacy, however, was not hurt by what might have seemed at first sight indifference or neglect. That Mabel seemed so willing to prolong her visit was at least a sign that she was enjoying herself; so when the little hasty notes of apology arrived, Victoria read between the lines, understanding that Mabel had something better and pleasanter to do than to write letters—even to her—and waited patiently for the announcement she felt sure would come sooner or later.

And when at last Mabel wrote to say that her visit to her cousins had culminated in her engagement to Hubert Lefroy, Victoria Lacy was not taken by surprise.

Then she sat down and wrote a little note of love and sympathy that was more precious to Mabel than all the congratulations with which she was daily overwhelmed.

"I have never seen Mr. Lefroy myself," so ran the note; "but if all the accounts I hear of him speak true, I think I would sooner trust my Queen Mab to him than to any one else."

I am not sure if the sweetest part of all those happy days for Mabel did not lie in the long talks between her and Victoria through the Summer hours—among the roses and the honeysuckles when the morning air was warm and soft and still, or in the evening light by the open window when the wood-pigeon's note sounded from the neighboring trees—talks which were all of Hubert, how good, how clever, how popular he was, and how happy she was in her newly found bliss! The theme never seemed to fail, never to lose its interest.

And it did not occur to Mabel *now* to dwell exactingly on the apparent indifference with which her friend could contemplate their coming separation. She had found something which, for the time at least, had power to fill her whole existence, and to satisfy the demands of her heart more completely than any friendship.

"Well, but, Mab, having heard so much of Hubert Lefroy, when am I to see him? I'm naturally dying to see any one so charming, let alone being eager to welcome him for your sake, dear."

This was how the daily conversation always ended;

but for a while no practical opening presented itself to Mabel for introducing her lover to her friend. At length, however, matters arranged themselves. The wedding was not to take place till the Autumn, and in the meanwhile Mrs. Lefroy, partly to gratify her son and partly from a sense of expediency in keeping the young people together, settled to spend the intervening months at a pretty little place that was to be let for the Summer, and which was hardly two miles distant from the home of Mabel Carr and Victoria Lacy.

Hubert Lefroy had formed a distinct conception of Mrs. Lacy long before he ever saw her, and, as is usual with such preconceptions, it was sufficiently wide of the mark, for the data on which it was based were the antagonistic descriptions of her which he received from Mrs. Lefroy on the one hand and from Mabel on the other. The impression conveyed to him through the medium of his mother's somewhat unreasonable antipathy to Victoria was that Mrs. Lacy must be a woman possessed with a passion for dominating, who had established an influence over Mabel by a system of flattery and by certain attractions of face and manner, which, however, he was sure would never be likely to appeal to *him*.

The Lefroys were no sooner established in their Summer home than Mrs. Lefroy and Mrs. Lacy went through the form of exchanging visits, which, however, did not result in the introduction of the latter to the bridegroom-elect. Whether by accident or by design, Hubert was a week in the country before Mabel was able to arrange a meeting between him and her friend.

Hubert Lefroy, having accepted an invitation to luncheon, made two mistakes; he forgot the exact time for which he had been asked, and so arrived half an hour too soon; and he lost his way, thereby finding himself at last in a rose-garden before an open window, instead of on the door-step correctly ringing the bell.

Somehow, when he got as far as the open window, though he hardly ventured to enter the house that way, he did not feel inclined to turn and go round to the front door. By the window was a high Japanese screen

all red and gold and grotesque figures, and on the other side of the screen a lady was sitting at the piano, and singing with all the pathos of a rich and sympathetic voice. It was not Mabel's voice he knew, yet it had the power to keep him listening there—how long he was never quite certain.

But the music ceased; a little blue Skye terrier crawled out from under the curtains, making a demonstrative commotion, and Hubert Lefroy found himself face to face with a lady, tall, graceful, dressed in black, whose face struck him at once less by its beauty than by its compelling interest. His first thought was an admission that, if this was Mabel's friend, she had some grounds for her enthusiasm; his next was one of annoyance with himself, primarily, for the admission; secondarily, because what was there really in Mrs. Lacy's appearance to make him so inconsequentially reverse his preconception of her? Victoria was the first to speak.

"Ah, Mr. Lefroy!" she said, forestalling his apologies, "we have cheated Mab out of her formal introduction; it is so much pleasanter to meet like friends than like strangers, isn't it? And we are friends already, I hope?"

"I hope so," he replied, rather gravely, as he took the hand which she extended. "I am very sorry to disturb you in this way, but I mistook the turning, and, having come in by the garden door, I didn't know how to get round."

"It was a very happy mistake," she replied, smiling; "you have seen Mab's home for the first time on its brightest and prettiest side, and that is as it should be."

He liked her for the way in which she at once identified him with Mabel. He sat down opposite to her, between the Japanese screen and the window, just in the warmest patch of sunlight, and felt already as if he had known her for years. Mabel, wandering over the grass, among the rose-bushes and the beds of yellow nasturtium and purple clematis, found them sitting so.

"Oh, you cunning creatures!" she exclaimed, stopping before them in the narrow gravel pathway; "so you've

managed to get over your first impressions without me by to notice!"

Then, stepping in through the open window and laying a hand on the shoulder of each, she said, with one of those smiles that made her face so intensely lovable, "And I hope neither of you ever means to be the least bit jealous of the other."

IV.

Mabel Carr and Hubert Lefroy were sitting together on the lawn, under the shade of a walnut tree, one hazy, hot afternoon some six weeks later on in the Summer. They were occupying two easy garden-chairs, and a third had just been vacated by Victoria Lacy. When she was out of earshot, Mabel said:

"Now, Hubert, won't you confess at last that she is quite as nice as I have always maintained she is?"

Mabel did not notice a peculiar light in Hubert's eyes as he gazed after Mrs. Lacy's retreating figure.

"She is quite, *quite* different from what I fancied her to be before I knew her."

"And doesn't she read charmingly?" continued Mabel. "It really is a pleasure to listen to her."

"She does everything well," he exclaimed, warmly; "she is—a—a wonderful woman."

Mabel laughed out merrily.

"Well, you've come round, certainly," she said; "and I'm glad you have, for I wanted you to appreciate my best and dearest friend, Hubert. But I knew you would when you came to know her—everybody likes her!"

He did not make any further reply. He took up the book which Victoria had thrown down on the grass, and opened it at the place where she had left off reading. Mabel went on working, humming a little song the while under her breath, utterly unconscious of the expression, half wild, half weary, that had stolen across her lover's face.

But had Mabel followed her friend into the house, I think she would have been startled at what she would have seen. Victoria had left the garden quietly enough, nothing in her look or manner suggesting any

effort of self-repression, nothing in her words or tone to indicate a slackening of her habitual self-control. Yet she wanted to get away from the glare of the sunshine, and the buzz of the insects, and the scent of the flowers, and from the sight of Mabel's bright, happy face. She wanted to be alone, to confront and to combat the truth that had dawned in her heart. For something in the story which she had been reading aloud had stirred a pulse of feeling, and had made her distinctly conscious at last of that in herself which she had hitherto but vaguely suspected. In the house, in the room half darkened by green blinds, it was quiet, it was cool, and, above all, she could be alone. That happy pair out in the sunshine, amid the birds and flowers, would not follow her in here.

"Oh, I wish, I *wish* I had never seen him!" was the passionate cry from her heart; and she kept on repeating this again and again as she paced up and down the room.

"If he only would go away! Why *doesn't* he go away?" she reiterated angrily. "Why should he waste his time down here when there's so much a man may do—and Mabel's love is safe enough?"

Then she stopped in her restless pacing, and leaning both her arms on the chimney-piece, stared at herself in the mirror. The mouth, so full of strength and purpose, was quivering now with sensibility, and the eyes, usually so calm, were bright and wild, and glowed all the darker for the dark circles underneath that unrest always brings.

Day after day for the last six weeks she had seen Hubert Lefroy. He was in and out of the house continually, for he had a fair claim to be free of Mabel's home, and Victoria herself had given him leave to come and go as he listed. She entertained him without embarrassment as a hostess and as Mabel's friend; she was content to play third person without any officious interference, reading to them when they tired of each other's talk, singing to them of an evening as they sat together in the twilight. She had got into the habit of watching for him and welcoming him for Mabel's sake, till at

last she felt, let her deceive herself as she might, it was *not* for Mabel's sake she watched and welcomed him now.

She strove to recover her normal strength and self-control by dint of hard reasoning; but it was cruel work, and her heart went back to the piteous, passionate cry, which was in itself an admission of weakness, "I wish I had never, *never* seen him! If he only would go away!"

But by degrees a better feeling came to her. Had she any right to demand that the happiness of others should be curtailed merely to make her own weakness the easier to cope with? Even if it were possible to arrange matters so that Hubert Lefroy should be compelled to go away for a while, the chief result of such a step would be keen disappointment to Mabel. Nor would it be very unlikely should some suspicion of the truth be thereby excited in Mabel's mind, the natural outcome of which would be to cause her bitter sorrow, and would probably strike a death-blow at the friendship which had hitherto brought such complete pleasure to both. No. It came home to Victoria's heart that, for Mabel's sake, nothing must be done to induce Hubert Lefroy to absent himself, even for a while. And the courage and self-control, which she had vainly sought to bring back at the bidding of reason, began to resume their accustomed sway under the better guidance of a tenderness which shrank from shielding self, even in the moment of its weakness, at the cost of a loved one's peace and happiness.

When she had taken this resolution, she felt herself becoming calmer—*happier* it would perhaps be too much to allege of her actual state of mind—but calmer, with a resigned, numb passivity higher than which not even the noblest natures can rise, in the first moments of an accepted self-sacrifice and self-effacement. And with a partially regained tranquillity came the power to reflect more effectively. Though it would be selfish to separate Mabel and Hubert during this, perhaps, the happiest part of all their lives, it would spoil no one's pleasure were she herself to go away. The matter could be easily arranged, bearing the stamp of reality so as to

excite no wonder and no suspicion—private business of her own, entirely independent of Mabel, being put forward as the excuse.

Just at this crisis in her reflections the afternoon post came in, bringing her a letter which, by one of those curious turns of circumstance that sometimes serve to settle definitely a hitherto half-formed plan, was such as might be made to do duty for the required business excuse. A faint, sad smile stole across her features as, with a touch of superstition from which few of us are, I think, wholly free, she accepted this coincidence of the letter in token that her resolve was meant to be carried into effect.

"Mab, darling," she said, when, a few minutes later at tea-time, she rejoined Mabel and Hubert Lefroy in the garden, "do you think you could arrange with Mrs. Lefroy for her to take you in for a bit? I find I must leave home—on some tiresome business."

"Oh!" exclaimed Mabel, sounding a long note of surprise and disappointment, "isn't that something new and sudden?"

"Not altogether; I've been expecting it," said Victoria quietly, as she poured out three cups of tea. "Do you think you could arrange it, dear?"

"Oh, easily," replied Mabel. "Mrs. Lefroy has been wanting me to go over there for the last month, hasn't she, Hubert? Only I told her I had treated you badly enough already, and I didn't mean to leave you again for the rest of the Summer. But if *you* run away from *me*, of course that alters the case. I dare say you won't mind having me, shall you, Hubert?"

And she smiled merrily in his face. He smiled at her an instant in return, but made no further reply.

"You might take a note from me to your mother, mightn't you?" she said, recurring to the subject some minutes later. "What time do you start home?"

"I ought to be going at once," he replied, looking at his watch.

"Oh, no, not yet," she pleaded; "you can walk it easily in twenty minutes."

"I'm afraid I must, Mab," he said. "We've some-

body coming to dine, you see, and I promised my mother to be home in good time. Would you mind writing your note at once, dear?"

"Oh, very well! You're in a desperate hurry, I must say," said Mabel, pretending to pout; and she went into the house to write her note, leaving Hubert Lefroy and Mrs. Lacy alone together under the walnut-tree.

There was silence between them; not the silence which springs from a complete mutual understanding, but the silence of embarrassment. She felt as if she could not exert herself to entertain him, even if her life had depended on it. She sat still, stroking the long hair of the blue Skye terrier, till the situation became insufferable.

"Mabel is a very long time writing her note," she said, getting up from her chair. "I wonder what she can be about?"

She turned and moved toward the house, and Hubert Lefroy, getting up also, walked by her side over the grass. Then, just as they reached the open window, that same window through which, six weeks before, he had seen her for the first time, he suddenly stopped, and said abruptly:

"Mrs. Lacy, why, *why* have you made up your mind to go away just now?"

She was so startled by the question, and in her present unhinged frame of mind it so jarred upon her, that she turned and looked at him with an expression of anger, assumed to conceal her deeper feelings, and for once in her life Victoria Lacy forgot to be courteous.

"Mr. Lefroy," she replied, "what can it possibly signify to *you* that I have made up my mind to go away just now?"

"I beg your pardon," he answered humbly; "I ought not to have asked."

And at that moment Mabel appeared with her note.

V.

If you have realized at all how complete was the affection between these two friends, how unreservedly the one had poured forth her whole soul in her happiness,

how tenderly and unconditionally the other had given her sympathy, then you may imagine something of what Victoria Lacy suffered in combating the conflicting claims of her heart. On the one hand she was conscious of her weakness; on the other she despised herself as mean and treacherous. Excited emotions and a sleepless night left her next morning with unstrung nerves, and in a state of unusual irritability.

"I think there is going to be a thunder-storm," she said, in answer to Mabel's tender inquiries. "You know, I always get a headache when there is too much electricity in the atmosphere."

"You don't look well, my sweet, certainly, whatever it is," said Mabel. "Perhaps it's a good thing you're going for a change, as you haven't been away for so long. Now, I am due at the school this morning, you know; but do let me make you comfortable on the sofa first. I am sure a nap would do you good."

Mabel's attentions were very tender and very thoughtful, she pulled down the blinds, arranged the sofa cushions, and fetched some eau de cologne and a fan. Her tread was light, her touch soothing, her kiss soft; and yet Victoria felt thankful when she closed the door gently behind her and left the house.

Physical exhaustion, however, must have its way, and Victoria was gradually losing herself in a half-doze when she was roused by a ring at the door-bell; and before she had time to decide whether she would allow the visitor to be admitted or not, she recognized the too-familiar step of Hubert Lefroy.

He came in, as he was in the habit of coming, without any formal announcement, wished her good-morning, and sat down opposite to her, as he had done so frequently since that first time when they sat together by the open window. Yet she could not help noticing something constrained in his manner which it had never evinced formerly.

"You know it is Mabel's morning at the school," she said, in a tone expressive of some surprise. He knew as well as she did that Mabel was out on a Wednesday morning, and he never came at that time.

"I have brought a message from my mother, to say she will be delighted for Mabel to come to us at any time whenever you settle to go," he replied.

"Mrs. Lefroy is very kind; I shall probably go by the 5 o'clock train this afternoon," she said; "but though you are going to have her all to yourself so soon, Mab will certainly be disappointed to find you have been here so early this morning."

"I didn't come to see *her* this morning, Mrs. Lacy; I came to see *you*," he replied, in the low, emphatic tone of a man who has something he means to say, and has made up his mind to say it at once. And he continued: "O, you may think what you will of me when I have made the confession; but since I have known you, haven't you seen that it has been to see *you* that I have come here day after day?"

He had risen from his seat while speaking, and as he uttered these last words, she involuntarily rose too. The first feeling that came to her was one of bewilderment; all other considerations were momentarily merged in the sudden consciousness that he loved her. Only momentarily, however; and then conscience rose up and speedily swept away the joy with a reactionary wave of bitter anguish. Yesterday she had but known the secret of her *own* heart, she had believed herself to have done no more than give away that for which she could hope to receive no return, and even so it had been hard to see her duty clearly. To-day she knew the secret of his heart also; she might receive as much as she would give—that for which she had longed might be hers, and yet she could not, dare not, take it.

"Oh, no, no," she exclaimed wildly, "you do not mean it! I know you do not really—you cannot!"

Somehow, now the truth was revealed to her, she almost wished it were not so; for whatever else she might feel and know concerning Hubert Lefroy, this one fact could not be forgotten—that he had won the love of Mabel Carr, and had pledged his love to *her*.

"I do," he answered emphatically. "I have watched you, listened to you, talked with you; no woman has ever been to me what you have been. Oh, I know what

you mean; I know what you're thinking; I understand your scruples; I indorse your judgment; but the truth remains—I love you! Don't shrink from the truth in return; you love me! For pity's sake, don't deny it!"

"I never thought you knew it!" she cried. "God knows I never meant to let you find it out!"

"Could I help it?" he replied. "Do you think I didn't follow your feelings when reading aloud yesterday? Do you think I didn't understand the meaning of your suddenly leaving home? Yes, I know my conduct must seem base and cowardly. I know how I must be branded in the eyes of the world; but I have risked it all for love of you; and *you*—you will stand by me for love's sake, will you not, you who have nothing to risk?"

Then a sudden courage came to Victoria as she recognized the three distinct claims made to her sense of what was right. To save him from the weakest part of his own nature, to stand to what her conscience told her was true, and to prevent, so far as it rested with her, the shattering of Mabel's dearest hopes.

"No," she said, and though her features were very white, she looked him steadily in the eyes. "No, it may not, it *cannot* be! Do I seem hard, unkind, inconsistent? Ah, believe me, you will judge me better by and by! Ask yourself—could I ever look Mabel in the face, could I ever take her by the hand again, if I answered you differently? So my last word to you is *no;* and I feel I have decided rightly for us both, though you cannot guess now, perhaps you never *will* guess, what it has cost me to answer you thus."

There was that about Victoria Lacy which stamped her decisions as absolutely irreversible.

"You may have your own reasons for returning me such an answer," he said bitterly. "I feel, of course, that I have lost even your good esteem, which I might have kept; yet, I should *never* have gone so far had you not led me on. If I had not thought you saw to what my fate was tending, do you think I would have come here this morning to say what I have said? But you last words yesterday were a direct encouragement to me to come. Yes, Mrs. Lacy, I have been base, cow-

ardly, selfish, cruel, anything you will—very mad and reckless, I don't deny; but that it has come to *this* has been your doing, and yours only!"

And with no other form of parting he turned and left the room.

Victoria let him go with no spirit to confront his cruel charge, no heart to bid him acknowledge his error. She remained standing, dumb and motionless, utterly worn out, feeling in those few moments as if she had lived a lifetime, as if everything for her were ended now. Mabel at least was happy, she thought.

She drew aside the window-blinds, thinking that the sunshine and the bright beauty of the flowers might do her some good; and then she was aware of Mabel standing on the gravel walk beside the window, with wide-open angry eyes, and such an expression on lips and brow as she had never confronted Victoria Lacy with before. Thus they stood, face to face, for one half-minute, the most miserable half-minute I think that either of them had ever spent, till Mabel broke forth with the vehement question:

"*Who* was that speaking to you just now?"

She knew well enough, but she chose to have an admission from Victoria's own mouth.

"Mr. Lefroy."

"And *he* was speaking like that to *you;* you who have been calling yourself my friend, and have been welcoming him here—only for your own ends! And I trusted you all the while, trusted you as one woman should *never* trust another! Oh, Victoria, Victoria, I never, never could have believed it of *you!*"

She paused an instant, catching her breath with a sob she could not repress, then burst forth again:

"I heard what he said—that he had been mad and reckless, but that *you* had led him on; that your words yesterday had encouraged him to come; that it was *your* doing it had come to this! And you never replied a word! I listened to hear if you would tell him he was unjust; but you didn't, you couldn't, you didn't dare! Nothing—no, nothing can ever make me believe that *he* has been wilfully faithless; it was a mad mistake on

his part; there's no one in the world can make herself more attractive than *you* when you choose. But I wish I could feel as I used toward you; yes, I *do* wish it with all my heart!"

There were tears in Mabel's deep-blue eyes as she gazed with an expression that seemed to implore some assurance that she was judging wrongly. Yet, with no further knowledge of the actual facts than had been conveyed to her by overhearing Hubert Lefroy's parting words, Mabel's reproaches were perfectly justifiable. Either her friend or her lover had cruelly wronged her; she had to decide which of the two would be the more likely under the circumstances deliberately to fail in faith to *her;* and she decided as was but natural, all things considered.

It was evident to Victoria that Mabel had only overheard the conclusion of the painful scene between herself and Hubert Lefroy, and her first impulse was to tell Mabel the whole truth. The next instant, however, she checked the impulse. Conscious that her heart had gone out of her own keeping, all unwittingly though it had been, she felt the explanation would be hard to make clearly. And then she could only establish her own justification at Hubert Lefroy's expense. No; it was better that she herself should be cruelly misjudged than that his weakness should be exposed: better that Mabel should condemn her friend than that she should learn from her the whole truth concerning the man she loved.

Mabel paused a moment; she expected at least some excuse; perhaps she felt herself entitled to be answered by some word of remorse; but no such word came. An intense effort at self-control gave to Victoria's features an expression which Mabel misconstrued into one of stubborn pride; the stronger nature would not stoop to own itself weak and erring.

VI.

Five years, and midsummer morning broke bright and still on the shores of one of Italy's fairest lakes.

It was a scene and a climate that Victoria Lacy loved

above all others. Day by day the steamers came in from Ancona or from Locarno bringing fresh tourists to these sweet shores. But her thoughts had gone back to a sweet Spring morning long ago, when in a little wooded dingle Mabel Carr sat among the primroses and the violets, with the fresh moss at her feet and the birds singing in the branches overhead.

That was the last Summer Victoria had seen her English home.

And what of Mabel, she wondered—her Queen Mab, whose bright beauty and loving heart had been to her so precious, for whom she had suffered and had sacrificed so much?

Since that Summer day five years ago, when they had parted, they had never once met. That it had been so had been of Victoria's doing, not of Mabel's.

And it was, perhaps, for the sake of another than Mabel that Victoria deemed it best to keep her presence out of her friend's home.

For Hubert Lefroy has married Mabel Carr. After his repulse by Mrs. Lacy, he went back, half in bitter remorse, half in a revulsion of genuine feeling, to more than his old allegiance; and Mabel, who worshipped with all the passion of a loyal nature, and who could not lightly dethrone her idol, pardoned him because it would have been such acute agony to have believed him really untrue, and because she did not think she could go through life without him.

Victoria Lacy turned away from the majestic mountains and the soft sky and the lovely lake. She left the shingly shore, crossed the dusty trodden highway, and began to ascend a narrow pathway up the wooded hillside. Victoria toiled on, indifferent to the steep ascent and the rugged ground, thankful only for the silence and the shade.

Nor did she notice when the shadow on the pathway deepened and the blue stripes of sky twinkled no longer through the green leaves. She was some way from Baveno; and now the drops that dripped from every leaf soon made the green protection worse than useless, and she had no umbrella. She had frequented this

path before, and she knew that at a short distance she might gain the shelter of a cottage-roof. Quickening her pace, she soon reached a small homestead, situated in a narrow, open space in the midst of the wood, and consisting of a dwelling-house, with a court-yard in front of it, a few sheds for cattle, an acre or two of cultivated land, and a small orchard of mulberry trees.

The Piedmontese peasantry are hospitable and harmless. Without any ceremony Victoria hurried into the court-yard, where she was suddenly confronted by a spectacle both curious and interesting. In the centre of the court-yard stood a group of four persons—a stalwart, swarthy peasant in a high hat and in his shirt-sleeves; a comely woman, evidently his wife, her head uncovered according to the custom of the place and the people; a girl of about twelve or thirteen, and a small, dark, cropped-haired creature, whether boy or girl it was difficult to determine, clad in a shapeless garment that looked as if it had been manufactured out of an old sack. This family group were clustered round a little fair-haired boy, who, mounted on a donkey, was roaring with all the force of a lusty pair of lungs. The child's dress was not that of a peasant; his appearance was rather English than Italian. Victoria's first idea was that she must suddenly have lighted on some malpractices carried on in the seclusion of the wood; but a rapid explanation on the part of the comely *contadina*, with whom she was acquainted, soon set her straight on this point.

It appeared that "*il Signorino Inglese*" had been brought thither for shelter from the storm by the boy in charge of him and the donkey; and that the boy, whom the woman described as "*il mio fratello*," having returned to the hotel at Stresa to procure a cloak for the child, she and her family were vainly endeavoring to induce the small stranger to quit the saddle and to seek shelter in-doors. He was clearly frightened at foreign faces and an unknown tongue; but it was a pity, she opined, that the *bambino* should get wet. Perhaps the Signora, being herself English, might be able to persuade him.

The Signora thought she might. She drew nearer

and gazed at the little fellow an instant with her soft, kind eyes. He was but a baby-boy, barely four years old, with flaxen hair, and large, blue, questioning eyes.

"Oh, what is the matter with my little man?" she said. The soft tones and the familiar speech checked his sobs. He began to stare, and then wailed out something which she could not understand, but in which she caught the one word "mamma." "I'm sure mamma wouldn't like to see her little boy so wet," continued Victoria, passing her hand over the child's wet Summer clothing. "Suppose you come inside there with me; see, I'm getting wet, too; you shall sit on my knee if you like, and then you'll be quite safe."

He did not resist, he rather seemed to cling to her. He sat on her lap and held her dress tight with both his tiny hands, staring at her with round wondering eyes whenever she addressed a remark in Italian to the farmer and his family. When she insisted that his frock must be dried, he let her take it off without remonstrance, and watched the garment with much interest as it hung before the fire. Presently he began to take notice of the dark, cropped-haired *bambino* in the sack, and he followed her lead till by degrees his tears and his shyness subsided. When, however, the boy returned with a cloak and an umbrella, and when, the storm having cleared, the donkey was once more saddled, the blue eyes filled again with tears, and he clung to Victoria's dress with the renewed tenacity of terror. She could not help wondering what were the conditions of his home-life that such a mite should be sent out for his ride with no more congenial guardianship than a Piedmontese peasant. The youth was evidently trustworthy and good-natured enough; but to this *signorino* in petticoats the attentions of a nursery-maid rather than those of a groom were surely most suitable. It hardly needed his earnest appeal, "Come too!" to make her resolve to escort him on his way back to Stresa. "Would Charley like me to come too?" she asked. "Oh, yes; I'll come."

And so, having taken leave of the kindly peasants, and having presented a few *soldi* to the black-eyed

bambino, they went on their way together in very friendly fashion, she with her arm round Master Charley's waist. In the course of the walk he grew very communicative, imparting many little incidents of his personal history.

"And why is Charley out to-day with only Colo? Why didn't Sarah come too?" she asked.

"'Cos Sarah stay wif mamma an' Sissy an' baby an' papa, wot's vezzy, vezzy ill," was the lucid explanation, imparted with great gravity.

After this Victoria walked on some way in silence. Both she and Colo accompanied the child to the very door of the hotel at Stresa, and it was she who lifted him out of the saddle. Just at that moment a young woman appeared in the doorway to claim Master Charley, and as Victoria consigned the child to her care, with a brief explanation as to how she had met him, they looked each other curiously and fixedly in the face. Victoria fancied, and yet she was not *quite* sure, that she recognized in this young woman Mabel Carr's former maid, who had accompanied her mistress when she married. She gazed an instant longer till doubt became certainty, and then with a wild heart-throb she rushed straight to her point.

"Sarah? Sarah Haines? Yes, I am sure it is! Tell me, are you still living with Mrs. Hubert Lefroy, Sarah?"

"Mrs. Lacy, m'm! Why, to be sure, so it is!" was the astonished Sarah's first recognition. "I thought I knew the face, m'm. Yes, m'm; I'm still living with Mrs. Hubert Lefroy."

A few more questions, and Victoria learned that Charley had spoken correctly. Hubert Lefroy was lying sick unto death. He had been out of health for some time, and had spent the Winter at Cannes with his family, and now a fever had laid him low, and there was little hope for his life.

"Sarah," she said quietly, "if Mrs. Lefroy *should* ask any questions, you may tell her *who* it was brought Charley home to-day."

She stooped and kissed the little boy with a fervor

warranted by something more than their short acquaintance; then she turned away.

That same evening a message was brought to Victoria, "*Il Signor Inglese è morto.*"

She waited a few days—waited till the quiet funeral had wound its way up the hillside to the burial-ground under the shadow of the beautiful little basilica that English benevolence and bounty has erected there. Then she paid a visit to the grave, placed a wreath of flowers upon the freshly turned sod, and walked away toward Stresa.

She strolled first into the hotel garden, and there she found three tiny black-frocked beings, Mabel's fatherless babies, with Sarah watching over their prattle and their play. It would have been a pathetic sight even to a stranger; it brought the tears into Victoria Lacy's eyes. Yet it was less of the children than of their mother that she was thinking then, and it was to learn tidings of *her* that she accosted Sarah.

"You wouldn't like to go and see her, m'm, I suppose?" said Sarah doubtfully.

"To see her is the one thing I long for," cried Victoria, her emotion now getting the better of her, "the one thing for which I came here to-day, if only I thought she would see me."

"See you, m'm!" rejoined Sarah warmly; "why, she'll see you and welcome! If you had only heard the way she was in when I told her you had been and left no address! I've heard her ask for you and call out your name. Go to her, Mrs. Lacy; it will do her all the good in the world just now."

So Victoria went: for there was nothing to blame in her going *now*. A glance showed her Mabel's fair familiar face pillowed on a sofa-cushion in the shadiest corner. She was asleep, worn out with watching and weeping, sleeping peacefully, almost heavily, unconscious of the intruder's presence, unconscious even when Victoria's soft hand pushed back the little white cap that she might get a full view of the sweet face with all its well-known wealth of golden hair.

Yes, it was the same face; its beauty somewhat

dimmed, perhaps, where the girl's gladness had vanished before the woman's woes, yet a beautiful face still, in the very curves which suffering had traced round the mobile mouth, in the very shadows with which weariness had painted the eyelids.

And what of that waking, when the blue eyes at length unclosed to meet, as if in a dream, the deep, true gaze of the woman who years ago had said she could die—yea, more, could live—for her friend? Only one sentence of that evening's converse shall be recorded here, one sentence whispered by Mabel:

"He told me all—all the truth; he told me to seek you out, dear friend, my own friend and *his*—to forgive you if I still thought I had anything to forgive, and to say how he had asked *your* forgiveness for the injustice of his angry words, and for all you had suffered thereby."

They have a home together once more, these two; not the old home of the flowery dingle, but another no less fair, for they know how to bring beauty where they dwell. And the voices of Charley and his sisters ring through the house and garden, calling for "auntie" as often as for mother, till Mabel's cheek will sometimes flush a little as she lifts her brows with their own peculiar trick of expression, and says, half in jest and half in earnest, so like the "Queen Mab" of past years, "They are as fond of you, dear, every bit, as they are of me."

The old trusting love is as true as it once was, in the days when they both were younger, with an added reverence and a new tenderness for the sorrows and the losses of each. Only *one* thought is rarely spoken between them; the thought that goes back to a grave on a wooded hillside overlooking a broad blue lake, where the romance of both their lives lies buried beneath the wild white Summer roses.

There is an amusing mixture of the stock material of the American and the French comic papers in this playful comedy by Charles Mouselet (turned into English for ROMANCE by H. L. B. Porter).

THE FIRST SERVANT.

PROLOGUE.

HUSBAND—Decidedly we must keep a servant, my dear love.

WIFE—Do you think so?

HUSBAND—Some sort of help in the family is indispensable. You get too tired every day. There is no sense in it.

WIFE—I appreciate the sentiment which actuates you, and I thank you for it. The truth is, there is a good deal to do here. One has no time to be lazy. But reflect well, my dear. We have been able to get along thus far without one,—and the expense!

HUSBAND—My salary has been increased three hundred francs, and I can in no way better use this surplus than in procuring a little rest for you. Let us take a servant.

WIFE—Oh, well! we will take one.

II.

OVERTURE.

The choice of a servant is an important matter. The search for one who should be suitable lasted about three weeks. It was difficult. The husband and wife wished for a servant such as does not exist, and never has existed,—the servant who should do all things superlatively well,—the ideal servant, the impossible servant. They sought at first among all their friends. Their friends begged to be excused. They then thought of sending for one to the provinces. There they might find, as one may say, a new movement, with solidity and morality guaranteed. They wrote to Alsace, to Burgogne, to Champagne, to Auvergne, even.

The candidates demanded time and a considerable amount of money. It was necessary to have recourse to the Employment Bureau. More than forty servants defiled before them. Not one of these suited the wife. That went without saying. That is why at the end of three weeks they took one almost at hap-hazard.

You might have seen one evening two young girls who came out of a miserably furnished public house and who patiently carried between them an old leather trunk. They traversed all Paris with that trunk, stopping from time to time to rest, and change hands. One of these was the servant. The other was one of her friends. The servant soon reported at the house of her mistress.

III.

Conversation of Lady and Servant.

Lady—My good girl, my work is not hard, but there is enough to occupy you. I will tell you just what you must do. Listen well, so that I may not have to repeat. First, I expect you to rise every day at six o'clock. Early hours are good for the health. You will commence by putting the dining-room in order. Then comes the cleaning of the boots. Monsieur soils many. You can brush his clothes on the veranda; my dresses, at the open window. We will breakfast at nine o'clock, for Monsieur must be at the ministry at ten o'clock. We will content ourselves with a dish of eggs or vegetables for breakfast. After breakfast you must set my bedchamber in order. You need not dust the stairway; that is very nice work and will be my charge. You will have a half-hour to dress. I like no coquetry, but I wish you to be neat always. Your apron ought to last two days. When you have become used to our ways, I shall expect you to get dinner alone. To-day I will assist you, in order that you may get acquainted with the furnace and the range. Monsieur and I like nourishing food. Always on Mondays we will have a stew; every Sunday, a leg of mutton or a fowl. It is rarely that we have a guest at dinner,—not oftener than two or three times a month. I will show you the bread

and the water. You will see there are many little duties to perform. For example, you will wash and iron once every week. You will scrub every day. It is necessary that your kitchen floor should be washed every day before you go to bed. When you have a moment's leisure during the day, you can sharpen the knives, or screw up the buttons on the doors, or cleanse the brushes. I cannot allow a servant to remain idle, with her mouth wide open like a stupid. In the evening you can mend the linen. You can have one day each month for going out. I have no need to recommend modesty to you, when out of doors. If I learn that you have put foot within a public hall, I shall send you away at once. I do not like your name of Josephine. I shall call you Maria. All servants should be called Maria. Avoid intimacies with the other servants in the house, and visit other lodgings as little as possible. Ah! I forgot. You will go to bed without a candle, for fear of fire. That is all. I believe you will be much pleased with your place, my girl.

IV.

Description of the Servant.

A beautiful servant,—as tall as a Picardy oak,—five feet six inches; brown as a nectarine; fresh as the tide; hair pomaded with butter; a form to beguile St. Anthony; sleeves continually rolled up to the shoulder; hands of Hyacinthe; feet of Charlemagne; weighty in walking as a regiment; loves red ribbons immoderately; is susceptible to the gallantries of the butcher's boy; one of those creatures whom men of the world call a serious female; sleeps in her stockings, and never dreams.

V.

Exposition at Table.

Husband—This is not bad, this little fricassée.

Wife—They are not difficult. Yet when I did the cooking you found nothing good. (A moment of silence.)

HUSBAND (complacently)—There is a little too much oil.

WIFE—Ah! I knew it well. Maria!

SERVANT (entering)—Did you call me, madam?

WIFE—I would advise you at first to say, "Madam has called me."

SERVANT—Madam has called me, madam.

WIFE—Of what are you thinking, my girl? Your stew was spoiled with oil. Monsieur could not eat it. It is only in cheap lodging-houses that one lavishes oil.

SERVANT—Madam, I will put none in another time.

WIFE—I did not say that you should put none in. You go from one extreme to another. I said to put in less.

SERVANT—Yes, madam.

WIFE—Take it out.

HUSBAND—But I have not finished.

WIFE—Take it out and bring the roast. (Servant departs.) Where is your head? In a moment you would have contradicted me before a servant?

HUSBAND—While she was promising to put in no more oil!

WIFE—Ah, well! if you are going to begin to give reasons to your domestics, you will have your hands full. I can tell you that.

HUSBAND—Let us eat. (The roast is passed without comment; then the dessert; then the coffee.)

WIFE (to servant)—You can eat your dinner now. Bring me the bread and I will cut you a slice.

SERVANT—Here, madam.

WIFE—Give me your glass, and I will pour you some wine.

SERVANT—Yes, madam. (Goes out.)

HUSBAND—Aren't you ashamed to measure thus her food and drink?

WIFE—That is always done. Why, where have you come from?

HUSBAND—Oh, all right, all right! I leave it all with you. (Rubbing his hands.) I am enchanted with having taken a servant.

VI.

Second Day's Return from the Bureau.

Husband—Good-evening, Lucile. Good-evening, my little wife. Ouf! what a day I have had! Laffitot is sick, and all his work falls on me. I am greatly harassed. I shall not see much of you for a few days now.

Wife—You do not know that the servant——

Husband—Let me sit down first.

Wife—She has broken a cup!

Husband—The deuce!

Wife—You seem to think it is funny! But I have deducted it from her wages.

Husband—Oh! it was only a cup,—and she did not do it purposely.

Wife—So much the worse. She will learn to be more careful another time.

Husband—You would be very kind, if you would give me my slippers. Excuse me, my dear, but I cannot take another step.

Wife (calling)—Maria, bring your master's slippers.

Husband—Bah! It is not worth the trouble. They are under the bed. (He goes to seek them.)

Wife—Then what is the good of having a servant!

Husband—Come here and listen to me. I wish to tell you a great piece of news. There is some talk at the ministry of making me under-chief. Ah! I could not believe it, but the general secretary has called me twice to-day into his cabinet. He has asked me many questions, in a quiet way, and it appears that Rollins will soon take his leave and——

Wife—And that bed! It is made without the least sense. Oh! the poor girl has much to learn.

VII.

Interlude.

Husband—How pretty you look this evening! That coiffure gives you a roguish air impossible to resist.

Wife—Have you not noticed that our sugar disappears very fast?

HUSBAND—No. It is nothing new, though. Is it the style now to dust the eyes with diamond powder?

WIFE—Formerly a pound lasted us three days.

HUSBAND—Embrace me!

WIFE—Let me alone! You are impertinent! No one can talk reasonably with you one minute.

HUSBAND—There is time for all that, Lucile. Kiss me now.

WIFE—What a man! My goodness! what a character! It seems to amuse you to be stolen from——

HUSBAND—There is poesy in the air this evening. Hang the sugar!

WIFE—To-morrow I shall count the lumps.

VIII.

BEGINNING OF THE DRAMA.

HUSBAND (placing a little mirror upon the window-seat; wishes to shave, calls)—Maria, my shaving-water.

SERVANT—Sir, here it is.

HUSBAND—Thanks.

WIFE—You look too much at the servant.

HUSBAND (dropping his razor)—What!

WIFE—She is a pretty girl.

HUSBAND—I have something else on hand at present.

WIFE—And there are men of so little delicacy——

HUSBAND (shrugging his shoulders)—Do talk of something else.

WIFE—Men that the duster does not repulse.

HUSBAND—Oh well, keep right along, if you must.

WIFE—Antoine, try not to be dramatic with me. You know how well I understand matters. Do you wish me to prove that I know all?

HUSBAND—All of what! Give us something for example, but take care not to make me cut myself.

WIFE—Ah, well! the fruiterer saw you yesterday talking on the street with our servant.

HUSBAND—What if he did!

WIFE—Do not attempt to deny it.

HUSBAND—I remember it very well. The fruiterer is a prophet.

WIFE—So you have talked with Maria?

HUSBAND—I have talked with her? No. I have spoken to her, which is very different.

WIFE—On the street?

HUSBAND—On the street. I told her to buy me a new brush for my beard. All the bristles have gone from mine. Look!

IX.

SUPREME CRISIS.

(In an alcove; three o'clock in the morning; husband soundly sleeping.)

WIFE (breaking suddenly into sobs)—Oh! oh! oh! oh!

HUSBAND (waking with a start)—Lucile, what is the matter with you? My darling, what has happened? Have I hurt you in any way?

WIFE—I was sure of it.

HUSBAND—Sure of what? Wait. I will get up. Where are the matches? It is an attack of nerves probably!

WIFE—Do not touch me! Do not touch me!

HUSBAND—Good heavens! What is it, that you are trying to do, my dear wife? Answer me. It is Antoine, your husband.

WIFE—Ought I to accept such an indignity?

HUSBAND—What indignity? You are a little out of your mind, dear. I am going to make you a cooling drink. It will be easy.

WIFE—Monster!

HUSBAND—Who is it that you find a monster?

WIFE—You dare to ask?

HUSBAND—Certainly.

WIFE—But a little while ago, when you were dreaming, did I not hear you pronounce the name of Maria?

HUSBAND—Ah! (He looks fixedly at his wife. Then, half-dressed as he is, he flings himself from the room, candle in hand.)

X.

Denouement.

(The husband entering like a bomb into the servant's room.)

Servant (rousing herself upon her cot)—What is it? Is it fire, or thieves?

Husband—Rise immediately, and go away.

Servant—What! rise at this hour? Surely you are crazy, my master!

Husband—Here are twenty francs, thirty francs, forty francs. Take your trunk and set forth. Do not lose a moment. You are the bravest girl in the world and a treasure in the kitchen. But what will you have? My wife has imagined all sorts of things. It is not my fault. You are frightful to me. But she has decided otherwise. Hurry and go, I pray of you. You do not wish to be the cause of unhappiness. Wait till to-morrow? Ah! well, I prefer you should go for a carriage at once. Come, girl, be reasonable.

Servant—Yes, sir, I will rise, but it is very extraordinary all the same.

Husband—True, but put yourself in my place. I am tired, and must have some peace. Every day is like the Inferno to me. It is better that you should go away at once. My wife is absurd, unjust, I know it well; but she is my wife. Hurry; I am going to call the porter.

Wife (running)—Don't let her go until I search her trunk!

Mr. Justin McCarthy is better known nowadays in his political than in his literary capacity. It is worth while to present anew this charming love-story from his pen (first published in *Harper's Magazine*), to remind the public of his polyglot endowments.

"IL BACIO."

Mr. Adolphus Ranthorpe was one of the magnates of London literature. He was a romancist and a dramatist. He was in every way an immense success. He was born in the purple of literature. His father had been a wealthy patron of poor poets and story-tellers; the son became a story-teller on his own account. Now Adolphus Ranthorpe would have been a wealthy man though all his novels had followed the fate of Jean Paul's first, and "gone off like wild-fire as waste paper." But to him who hath shall be given, and Mr. Ranthorpe's novels and plays were a great success. Money rolled in to him as to Dumas. He had the critics and the public too—the critics, because they all knew him personally and were attached to him, and perhaps, too, because he kept open house and gave such splendid dinners. At his little festivals, I am told, you have twelve wine-glasses beside each plate. The true Amphitryon, the really great novelist, beyond doubt is the novelist who sets twelve wine-glasses beside your plate. For myself, I don't care much about Ranthorpe's novels; I don't see anything in them. But I confess to having heard that he disparaged one of my own little works, and I don't dine at his house—in fact, I have not been asked.

The public admire Ranthorpe's novels because he tells a fine story, with a vigorous current of life rushing through it like a healthy breeze, and full of that old romantic emotion about true love and courage surmounting difficulty, and passion stronger than death, and all that sort of thing, which sets the great child-like heart of the big public throbbing, and fills its great soft eyes

with tears. To say the truth, although I myself disparage the merit of Ranthorpe's works in an intellectual point of view, yet if I take one up, I can't put it down until I have got to the end of it; and whenever the hero does something splendid for love of the heroine, or *vice versa*, I find myself positively wishing I was that hero. But, of course, to compare that sort of thing with the thoughtful and intellectual masterpieces of Slowboy, or the profound psychological studies of Barnacles, or the less appreciated but still more refined and impressive works of—well, it's no use mentioning names! Ranthorpe is anyhow a great success and a rich man, with a country house and a mansion in London.

In his study in this mansion sat Ranthorpe one spring day. He was a big man, some fifty-four years of age, dark-haired, with a large beard, and not one faintest shadow of gray in hair or beard. He wore a shabby old velvet coat, and he was now waiting for an idea.

His servant told him a young man wished to see him. The young man would not give his name, but declared he must see the great author. The great author grumbled, groaned, turned uneasily in his chair, threw down his pen, and, as usual, consented to be interrupted.

A slender young man of four or five and twenty, and a pale, eager face, deep, dark eyes, and a small mustache—the brand of the race of artist stamped on every lineament and member from forehead to fingers—entered the room. He was carelessly dressed, but there was an ease about him which banished every appearance of shabbiness. He carried a book in his hand, at the sight of which Mr. Ranthorpe shuddered.

"Mr. Ranthorpe," the visitor began, "I am one of your devoted admirers. Your works have *made* me! They have aroused in me an ambition and a knowledge of what I can do. You have brought me up to London, through your books."

Mr. Ranthorpe bowed, but could not say he felt glad.

"My name," the young man went on, "is Hayward—Philip Hayward. I am alone in the world, and I have come up to London to make a fame! Therefore I have presented myself at once to you as my teacher and chief."

Mr. Ranthorpe bowed again, and asked, "Have you any friends in London?"

"None—except *you*."

Ranthorpe smiled, but was rather touched by this boyish kind of confidence.

"Have you no one to give you a helping hand?"

"No one but God and you."

Ranthorpe was tempted to repeat the old *bon mot* to the effect that no one could have two patrons who had less influence in London. But he did not, for the thing was becoming rather serious.

"Excuse the bluntness of my question: have you any money?"

"Oh yes, plenty. I never would have come even to *you* if I had any fear of being taken for a beggar. I have sold everything I could spare, and I have a hundred and odd pounds left. I live on very little, and I hope to be in the way to make a fortune and fame before all that is spent."

Ranthorpe smiled sadly. Fortune and fame so soon! A fortune to be made in literature by a novice before he had spent one hundred pounds!

"You have already published something?" Ranthorpe said, glancing at the book which his visitor carried.

"Yes; I have published this—a sort of philosophical story, or prose poem."

"Was it a success?"

"No," said the young man, boldly. "I didn't expect it to be."

"Ah, too good for the dull world! I see. We all begin that way. Did the critics attack it?"

"No; not exactly."

"Was it reviewed at all?"

"Hardly; two or three short notices; faint praise."

"No condemnation, no censure, no sensation at all?"

"None."

Ranthorpe thought this a very desperate case.

"Tell me frankly," he said, "why you think you are likely to succeed in literature. Remember, you have actually been in the field; you have had your chance. I have known fellows whose first attempt lay for years

mouldering, from mere want of a publisher; but when the thing came out at last, it made a hit. Now your first attempt has been out—how long?"

"More than a year."

"Yes; and I, who am concerned in nothing but literature, never heard of it or you. Excuse me if I speak plainly; it's best and honestest. Come, now; this first attempt is clearly a failure. Why do you think the next is likely to be a success, or the next?"

"Will you look at my book?"

"My good fellow, what's the use of *my* looking at your book? I can't order a new edition, and make it pay. If you have to live by literature, you must write for the public or the critics, or both. The public and the critics would not have this book, it seems."

"I only came to ask you to look at my book, Mr. Ranthorpe."

"I suppose so. I guessed as much from the first. Well, hand it over. Let's have a look."

Ranthorpe took the little volume. He had a wonderful way of getting the meaning and value of a book into his mind in a moment. He used to say, "I haven't time to read. I tear the heart out of a book, and then put it away."

The young man watched him with a glowing cheek and eager, kindling eyes. The confidence which had carried him on so far seemed to desert him during this awful ordeal. The great author was actually looking at the pages of his first effort. Ranthorpe was thus occupied for about twenty minutes.

Suddenly the door of the study opened, and a pretty, brown-haired girl came in. She was so pretty and graceful, her eyes were so animated and sparkling, her hair was so rich in its curling masses, that our poor Hayward forgot even his first literary venture and its ordeal as he looked at her. He rose from his chair. She was about to draw back, seeing the stranger, when her father, without looking at her, made a peculiar motion with his hand. She smiled, blushed, looked a little embarrassed, but remained standing just as she was, and said not a word. She kept the very attitude

of attempted retreat, and looked as graceful as Canova's "Dancing Girl." The young man assumed that he had better keep silence too, and remain standing, and he did so; but, instead of fixing his eyes now on the great author, he glanced every moment furtively at the pretty girl. The moment was delicious, but embarrassing.

"There!" said Ranthorpe, after five minutes more had passed, and he put down the volume. "That will do, Charlie; I release you.—I am great in discipline in this room, Mr. Hayward. If my daughter ventures in while I am reading anything that requires attention I make a sign, and then she knows that she isn't to speak, she isn't to go away—for that would only distract me again—and she isn't to rustle her dress. She is a good girl, and does as she is told. Charlie, this gentleman is Mr. Hayward, a new friend of mine."

"I am afraid you thought me very rude and awkward, Mr. Hayward," said Charlie (otherwise Charlotte); "but papa's orders are imperative in this room. Anywhere else I can generally have my own way, but here he is supreme."

"Well, Charlie, now that you may speak, what is it, love?"

"I only came to ask you about luncheon, dear. Shall you be at home?"

"Yes, certainly. Mr. Hayward will take luncheon with us."

"Charlie" bowed to the visitor, gave him a friendly smile which meant welcome, and escaped. Her smile was wonderfully like that of her father. The young author had not been able to say a word. For the first time in his life he thought himself a fool.

"Well, Mr. Hayward," said the great author, "I think I have read enough of this to form an opinion."

For a moment Charlie ceases to inhabit the mind of our youth. He awaits the sentence in eagerness and awe.

"Yes, I think I can judge. I don't wonder it failed. You affect obscurity, thinking it fine, no doubt—young men always do; a great mistake, for young men have no thoughts that are worth people's groping after. All the thinking parts, the philosophic parts, of the book

are poor and thin stuff, mere rubbish. Everybody who isn't a downright idiot has thought all the same kind of thing, but that isn't any reason why it should be put into print. I indorse the verdict of the public as to this book—as a book, observe. It ought to be a failure; but—don't be alarmed—I don't say that *you* ought to be a failure."

The young man's heart had almost stood still with a shock of grief and pain. A faint gleam of hope now bade it beat again.

"No; there are sparkles of fancy here and there—and of humor too, when you are off your philosophy—which *do* promise. Try your hand next at a mere story—a story of common life, but with a lyric dash of passion in it. I shouldn't wonder if you were to succeed. I am not too hopeful, for I have seen rather too much of this sort of thing; but, at least, I know of no reason which forbids you to succeed. Come, I can't say anything more; and now what do you want me to do for you?"

"Nothing more, Mr. Ranthorpe. You have done enough already. You confirm my faith in myself—you encourage me to live!"

Ranthorpe smiled. Some people are easily encouraged, he thought, especially when they have made up their minds beforehand. "Well, then," he asked, "what are you going to do for yourself?"

"To begin a new work this very evening."

"What is it to be about?"

"I don't know yet. The idea will come, I am sure."

"Good! If you have any genius, trust to it. When the first three chapters are done, let me see them. Now let us have luncheon, and then we must both of us set to our work."

That was a wonderful day for young Philip Hayward. To have spoken with the great author would have been something—indeed, a pride and delight; to have been encouraged to go on in literature by him was the rich fulfilment of a wild dream; to sit at his table and be talked to by Ranthorpe as a friend was beyond words; but to sit next to Ranthorpe's daughter was simply ecstasy. Poor Philip Hayward was in a dream.

Ranthorpe was a charming companion—fresh, boyish, full of humor and good spirits. As for the daughter, young Hayward was madly in love with Charlie before he left the house. She was Ranthorpe's only child, and he was a widower.

The successful author took a great liking to the young man, and invited him to his house again and again. He could have found him ample opportunity of making a little money by writing for the magazines, but Philip Hayward firmly declined doing anything of the kind. He said he had made up his mind to try one book more, and do his very best, and that nothing should distract him from that purpose. "If this is a failure, Mr. Ranthorpe," he said, "I'll supplicate you then to get me a chance on the magazines."

"Your withered serving-man makes your fresh tapster, eh?" said Ranthorpe. "Your unsuccessful novelist turns out your excellent magazinist! Good for the magazines!" But he liked Hayward's spirit and resolve all the same.

Philip took a small room in a suburban house, and worked away there. He spent many of his evenings at Ranthorpe's. The hundred pounds were nearly out, but the book was on the verge of publication, and the hopes and fears of the young author were almost distracting. For they were not now hopes and fears bound up only with his literary success; they were bound up by his very heart-strings. O dullest of great romancists! most blundering student of human nature! Ranthorpe, how could you go on from day to day evolving love-entanglements out of your moral consciousness and not see what was certain to happen, what was actually happening under your own bright, brown, blinded eyes? If anywhere else Ranthorpe had seen a pretty poetic girl and a handsome romantic youth thrown together, he would have at once seen material for love chapters in them. At home he only saw a devoted daughter, who was a little child the other day, and a spirited, manly young fellow, who was merely trying to make his way in the world.

One evening Philip Hayward came to Ranthorpe's

house and found that his great patron was not at home. But Charlie was, and of course Charlie saw him.

"I have written the last line of the last chapter," said Philip.

"Oh, how delighted I am! What a success it will be! But you look depressed and melancholy. Why is that? Tell me. You ought to be full of hope and joy." She laid her hand gently upon his arm.

"I am afraid now; I am a coward! I have no confidence; I only think of failure. Charlie, if it should fail!"

"But it sha'n't fail; it won't fail! And if it did, you must only try again."

"Try again! With what chance? My whole life is staked on this venture. If I lose this, Charlie, I lose *you!*"

"Oh, for shame! How can you speak so? Philip! to think that I could change to you because of a book! Have I not given you my whole heart? I didn't give it to your book."

"I never doubted you, dearest" (and he took her hand); "I am not such a miserable wretch. But your father. Can I ask him to give his daughter to a pauper and a failure?"

Charlie did look sad and dazed for a moment. "I can't imagine papa doing anything which would make me unhappy," she said; "and he has money enough, I am sure. But he is a little hard on failures; and then you are proud; but oh, please, don't let us think of dreadful things that never shall or will occur. If I tell papa that I cannot live happily without you——"

"But then I shall be only a pensioned pauper. What woman could respect such a husband?"

"No, but fancy *your* being a pensioned pauper! As if you *could* fail to make a way for yourself in life! I know you too well for that."

"But suppose——"

"I won't suppose. I can't suppose anything but your being clever and successful. But if you are not, well, then, do you think I could care the less for you because the world didn't appreciate you? *I* appreciate you—that's enough for me."

"And enough for me," cried Philip, in ecstasy.

Both Charlie and her lover were a little remorseful at the idea of having all this profound secret from her father, and they determined only to wait for the success of the forthcoming *chef-d'œuvre* in order that Philip should boldly tell Mr. Ranthorpe how much he loved his daughter.

The book came out. It was in one sense a complete success. It had the approval, nay, the enthusiastic admiration, of the highest critics. It won for its author a name to be respected wherever literature was talked of. It gave him an individual celebrity. It placed him well up among rising authors—that is, in the estimation of the literary class. But the public did not much care about it. The libraries did not clamor for it. A few copies sufficed all demands. The book paid very little to the author or the publisher. Poor Philip was, in a pecuniary point of view, now exactly where he started. His original hundred pounds were all gone, and his great work gave him another hundred pounds. Our young author was almost crushed with disappointment. Mr. Ranthorpe could not understand this, for in his mind the book was a genuine success. It had won the wise, and he felt no doubt that in time the foolish would follow. The wise appreciate, and the foolish pay.

"You silly boy," Ranthorpe said, "you have made a great hit. Don't you see that if you only keep up your reputation it will soon become the 'right sort of thing' to buy your books? People will buy them because the critics say every educated person reads them. Then you are all right. You will have the admiration of the appreciative and the guineas of the rest. It is not given to many men in a century to have the sincere admiration of all. You have done very well, and ought to be delighted. I didn't know that you cared so much about mere money."

Poor Philip thereupon burst out with a full confession. He told of his love, of his hopes, and of the reason why he so wanted money. Mr. Ranthorpe was absolutely bewildered. This return for his kindness he had never expected. In language of grave anger he rebuked the audacious young man, showed him how it

was impossible his daughter could live in poverty, and equally impossible that a man of any spirit could consent to live as a pensioner. He flatly refused to hear any more on the subject; and Hayward left the house like one utterly crushed.

Mr. Ranthorpe was very sorry for all this. He had grown to like the companionship of Hayward, and to take an interest in him. The sincere devotion of the young man was grateful to him; and Philip was brimful of ideas and fancies which refreshed the elder author, and sometimes even came to his aid as he toiled, now perhaps somewhat mechanically and perfunctorily, over his books. He had had great ideas of employing Philip permanently as a secretary and *collaborateur;* and now all this was shivered to pieces by the young man's preposterous folly. The idea of handing over Charlie as a wife to a poor youth, simply because a lad and a girl chose to fancy they were fond of each other, seemed to the love romancist simply absurd.

He had a sad time, too, with Charlie. For the girl told him in the plainest language that she loved Philip Hayward, and never could love any one else. She defended her lover plaintively and passionately, denied that he had ever been ungrateful to Ranthorpe, insisted that *she* had done all the love-making and was to blame for all, and, in a word, much bewildered and tormented the kindly heart of her father. Still he thought he saw his duty as a parent, and he would not give way. But he was very unhappy.

Days and weeks went on and made no change. There were times when, as Ranthorpe kissed his daughter and looked with sad and anxious eye upon her pale cheek, she thought she could see signs of yielding on his part —symptoms that seemed to show that he would be glad to be even compelled to yield. But he said nothing, and she said nothing; and each knew that the other was wretched.

Charlie was always accustomed to act as a sort of secretary to her father. None but she was ever allowed to put his papers in order, and when he was out of the house, she generally set things to rights in his study.

One of his whims was that no servant must touch the smallest scrap of paper belonging to him, and that the shelves must not even be brushed free of dust unless Charlie was present to direct and control the operations. Charlie, of course, remained faithful to her functions even in her unhappiness. One of Mr. Ranthorpe's literary peculiarities was to endeavor to take all the incidents of his stories from real life. When any striking little event attracted his attention in a newspaper narrative, he often cut out the scrap and pasted it in a memorandum-book, ready for possible use, with perhaps a note of his own affixed. Now on one of her saddest days after the separation of her lover and herself she entered her father's study, and almost mechanically went to work to arrange his papers. An open memorandum-book caught her eye. It contained a printed scrap of paper, pasted in, and with a few words written by Mr. Ranthorpe. "Not a bad notion," Ranthorpe wrote; "might be used for a little comedy or proverb, or an incident in a novel. Clever, but, I should say, can't be true. A French girl would never do it."

What was the scrap? It was an account of the manner in which a French girl, daughter of a distinguished statesman, whose name was broadly hinted at, compelled her father to accept the proposal of a brilliant but poor young foreigner whom she loved for her hand. We shall not tell just yet what the stratagem was.

Charlie dropped the book, and her face reddened, her eyes sparkled; she clapped her hands in wild delight. She sat down and trembled, got up and paced the room with renewed courage, and, in fact, seemed beside herself with agitation and excitement. At last she made up her mind. "I'll do it!" she exclaimed; "I'll do it! Perhaps you are right, my wise papa; perhaps a French girl wouldn't venture. But you shall see that an English girl would!"

She ran to her own room and covered her face with her hands—timid, but firmly resolved.

Next day poor Philip Hayward, drudging sadly in his lonely den, received a letter, the very sight of which made him start and tremble. It was in the handwriting

of Charlie. Since her father had rejected his prayer the two young lovers had been loyal, and had not striven to meet or even interchange letters. This little scrawl, which made him wild with joy, contained only a few hasty lines. It told him that on the following night her father and she were to be at the opera with an elderly lady and gentleman of great dignity and high social position, whom Mr. Ranthorpe greatly reverenced; and it begged Philip, if he truly loved her, to come to their box at nine o'clock, to tap at the door, and when admitted to express no surprise at anything that might occur, but adapt himself at once to whatever should happen. "If you love, love, love me, do this, and don't fail your devoted Charlie."

Think of the day and night our lover spent—his wonder, his hope, his feverish longing and dread, his torturing anxiety to know what it all could mean! It seemed humiliating to go, for any purpose, to Mr. Ranthorpe's box; but if Charlie had bidden him to walk into Buckingham Palace or into the Thames, he would have obeyed without remonstrance.

Mr. Ranthorpe and his party are in their box at the opera. Miss Charlie is palpitating and *distrait;* her father cannot but see it; he pities the child and is tender to her, and almost wishes he hadn't seen his paternal duty quite so clearly. She draws back from the front of the box, and says she prefers to sit a little behind; and Ranthorpe looks anxiously at her, fearing that tears are in her eyes. She can hardly speak, so he endeavors to do all the talking for his guests. Nine o'clock comes, and Charlie's bosom heaves "like a little billow." "Will *he* come?" she thinks; "and shall I ever have the courage? If he comes and I *fail*, we are lost!"

A light, hesitating tap is heard at the box door. Oh, he comes! She half rises from her seat, and looks all crimson toward the door. Ranthorpe calls, "Come in," and glances round. The door opens, and Mr. Philip Hayward, pale and embarrassed-looking, stands in the box.

And before Ranthorpe can say a word his daughter

springs from her seat, takes both hands of the astonished Philip in her own, reaches up to him, kisses his lips, and exclaims, "My dearest Philip!"

Then she looks round, turns pale, and faints in her lover's arms.

Here was a pretty scene for Ranthorpe's party and for the theatre! The novelist saw the whole thing at a glance. He remembered having left his memorandum-book open with the fatal scrap of paper; he saw by the bewildered looks of Philip that the young man was as much amazed and innocent of complicity as himself; he was conquered by the girl's devotion and by the humor of the whole scene. He was equal to the situation.

"Let us bring her into the corridor, Philip," he said. "Don't be alarmed, pray" (to his guests). "Let me introduce my intended son-in-law, Mr. Philip Hayward. This foolish child has been wild all the night lest he should not come. What people these young lovers are, Lady Harriet!"

In a very few moments Miss Charlie revived, and she saw instantly how things had gone. She crept tenderly to her father and touched his hand. He answered with an affectionate pressure; and she knew that all was well.

"Now, my love," said Ranthorpe, "since you are well again, sit with Philip and explain to him why you fainted, and let us elders enjoy our music."

"You see, papa," she said, in the faintest whisper, "I wanted to show you how much more courage an English girl has than you would allow to a French girl."

Ranthorpe only said, "*Comme l'esprit vient aux filles!*" and shrugged his shoulders good-humoredly. The *coup de baiser* was a relief to him too, and put him out of pain.

The young pair were married; and Mr. Philip, I know, is already making a name and a decent income in literature.

This well-told incident of life in the West in the rough days following the Civil War is from the pen of Major James W. Steele, whose army and frontier sketches have given him as high a rank among literary workers as he has always held among students of military science and practice.

A LONESOME CHRISTIAN.

GRIMES was his name—"Old Grimes" he was called by the irreverent world, which knew him well, and which doubtless he knew too in return, as a man knows something that has not been pleasant to him, and the pain and wickedness and hollowness of which have been forced upon him by a grim experience.

Grimes' name was the only thing about him that offered any poetic suggestion, and was not lightly passed or forgotten by those who saw him every day. The legend of that old man whose dirge has been sung these sixty years—whose coat was old, and gray, and buttoned down before, in every version of that irreverent elegy—is the common inheritance of all the English-speaking race wherever they wander. The ragged urchins twanged it endlessly in his ears from behind the corners of shanties whenever his bent figure came in sight. Even the grown-up Texans, who lounged, gambled, and traded horses at the sutler's store, repeated it to him as a standing joke that could not be worn out. But he paid no attention, or diverted the topic when he could, and hobbled away slowly, ever muttering to himself something that nobody heard or heeded.

The residence of this song-tormented old person was a rough and canvas-covered shanty, situated by a rambling path in the midst of a congregation of such, some better, some worse. The place was known by the denizens of the neighboring post as "Slabtown." The open and unfinished quadrangle, and the square stone houses that had all a homeless and dreary look, were some half-mile away. Fort Concho was confessedly a hard place, all of it. Slabtown was its foster-child, filled

with stranded emigrants, cattle-herders, gamblers, and men who had no occupation. Out toward the bleak northwest, Llano Estacado stretched its endless leagues of rock and cactus—the wildest land beneath the flag, governed and owned by the Comanche, and utterly useless and tenantless for all time, save for that Saxon savage almost as wild as he.

But Slabtown, straggling up from the little river's side, sat with its shanties under the lee of the post, fully confiding in its military neighbor. Here were privileged to come, and remain through the windy Texas winter, all men, with a due proportion of women, whose tastes or whose occupations led them to the far verge of civilization. Thither came the cattle-man, and watched his wild herds on the neighboring hills, until returning greenness warned him off upon the California trail. Thither returned the man who had accomplished the wonderful journey, laden with fortunate gold. Bearded, broad-brimmed, and belted, here lounged a small army of guides and trailers, playing shrewd games at cards, drinking San Antonio whiskey, and at intervals shooting at each other. The gaunt and long-footed Texas girl, chalky, yellow-haired, and awkward, minced from cabin to cabin with neighborly gossip, and did her calico-and-green-ribbon shopping at the pine counters of the trader's stores. There were urchins many, coatless and shoeless from January to December, who were as the calves of this corral of humanity. Here, too, was that pink of the border, the dashing stage-driver, who, for forty dollars per month, every day ran the gauntlet through sixty miles of Indian-haunted desolation, and who, at the end of his "trick," rewarded himself with two days of dalliance with the belles of Slabtown, to whom, indeed, he was as the apple of their pale eyes.

And among these people lived Father Grimes, and these were they who sang the ancient ditty to him as he passed by. What his occupation was, nobody precisely knew or cared; but they "'lowed" he was "well-heeled," and "had a little tucked away somewhere." In the particular condition of society—or, rather, want of all

society—that environed him, the inquiry into Grimes's business would hardly have gone so far as that, had it not been that his daughter occupied a conspicuous position as the prettiest girl at Concho, and was famous alike for the brilliancy of her cheeks and her dresses. She and Father Grimes lived alone, and it was scarcely thought of that at some former period a mother had been necessary in the usual course of nature. "Old Grimes and his gal" filled all the Grimes horizon.

It would be entirely in accordance with good taste if it were possible now to describe a dutiful daughter, entirely devoted to her aged father, and resenting the verbal indignities daily heaped upon him. But the facts, as somewhat dimly remembered, altogether forbid. Of all the man's troubles, his daughter was probably the greatest. She was not gaunt and angular, like the other ladies of Slabtown as a rule; her cheeks were like peonies, and her round figure had a perceptible jellyish shaking as she walked. She disturbed her father's slumbers with hoydenish laughter, while the hours struck small in the night watches, and while her many admirers stayed and would not go. She was a coquette besides, and refused to comfort the paternal heart by assuming the hard duties of a Texan's wife. Sary Grimes was a wild girl, possibly not a bad creature, but, as it might have been expressed in an eastern village, "liable to be talked about"—one of the social punishments not much dreaded, however, in the region of Fort Concho. There was, I fear, a consciousness in her face whenever she passed a man in the road, and it is equally to be feared that her prudent chastity had but little suggestion of snow or crystal in it. But as the belle of Slabtown, she reigned supreme; and, of course, the greater part of her female friends cast aspersions upon her. She kept all her admirers in a state of mind which had in it much torment, with occasional glimpses of beatitude. Charles Hanks, Esq., stage driver, started out upon his trip with a large fortune of happy thoughts, and discussed the object nearest his heart with the box-passenger for twenty miles at once. But when he returned, Sary would no more speak to

him than if, as he complained, he "had been a yaller dog." But Mr. Hanks had no special cause of complaint, for he fared as all his rivals did.

Father Grimes' reputation was that he was "allus good to that gal o' his'n." He was never known on any occasion to use a petulant expression to any person or thing. The peculiarity more often remarked in him than any other was that he did not swear. It was a wonder he did not, for nobody doubted that he had a hard life of it. With regard to Grimes, the half has not been told. We have seen men who had survived some great disaster, some horrible mangling, and went crawling through life thereafter, lame, scarred, deformed, the hideous semblance of a human creature. Such was this poor, rich old man. His limbs were drawn awry. His shapeless hands almost refused to grasp his staff, and every line of his face denoted an experience of pain, happily past for the time, but ever leaving a grim promise to return and wring the distorted limbs anew, until the hour of his relief. Yet Grimes had not been the victim of any sudden accident or great calamity. Fire, nor falling walls, nor the rebellion of man's gigantic servant against his master in rushing steam and falling fragments, had been incidents in his hard life. And yet his fate had been little better. His days had been days of pain, and his nights had been spent in torture, and in waiting and praying for daylight or death. It is common enough, but Ariel, bright spirit of enchanted air, suffered and groaned no more in the cloven pine than a strong man may beneath rheumatic torture.

Thus it was that the old man's gentleness was a marvel to those who reviled him daily. Worn and deformed with his battle of years with his enemy, he sat at his cabin-door in the sun, and placidly nodded at those who passed by, and whispered to himself, and smiled. Sometimes he had been asked if it had not hurt him while in slow torment his limbs had been twisted and drawn thus. "Oh yes," he said, "it did hurt," but he smiled as he thus answered a question which would have been both superfluous and cruel if

the old man had not seemed to possess some panacea which enabled him to almost defy pain.

This distorted figure, this pain-written face, and these strange ways, Father Grimes possessed alone. They were strange in the land, for sturdy, bearded manhood, reckless ways, loud words and a blood-curdling blasphemy were the rule with his associates and near neighbors. While they knew that he had within him something which they neither possessed nor understood, they only said "curus creetur," and passed on. Whatever it was, they had no respect for it; they thought him a little crazy. He had done strange things that they knew of. Had he not once tried to interfere with a very promising horse-race on a Sunday? Did he not come down to the trader's store one night last fall, and lift up his quavering voice in a Methodist hymn, and try to get up a prayer-meeting right there among the boys, "and a hundred dollars in the pot, and me with three queens in my hand?" It was Charles Hanks, Esq., who described this scene, and added, "He's an old fool, with a stavin' purty gal; 'twas just that which saved his meat,—a interferin' thataway."

It was not strange that, with these queer ways, Father Grimes was alone in such a place, with only his heart to keep him company. There was a chaplain at the post, but he seemed as yet to have discovered no affinity for this eccentric old man. He preferred soldiers of the cross of more robust tendencies, and in line. If being a Christian was what was the matter with Grimes' dazed head, he had an entire monopoly of the complaint. On bright Sunday mornings there was a formal service on the parade ground, and plumed heads bowed slightly in the etiquette of military devotion. But Father Grimes was as much out of place there as he was at the sutler's, and stood afar off, failing to understand, perhaps, what all this had in common with a camp-meeting in far western Virginia, or with such piety and worship as would have been acceptable to his fellow-believers of the United Brethren in Christ.

Of course, he had little control of the hoydenish Sary. That young woman shared somewhat in the current be-

lief regarding her father's mental condition. Living in the same house, they had no companionship; and while she cared for his common wants and daily meals, that was the extent, to all appearance, of her interest in him. He perhaps constituted the sober side of her life; she would have been ready to do battle for him with a ready tongue, but she also claimed the privilege of privately regarding him with as much carelessness and half-contempt as was possible with her knowledge of the fact that he really was her father and she could not help it.

The incident which placed Father Grimes prominently before the public in a new light—an incident all the more remarkable because it was the last in his career—came about in this wise: There wandered into Concho a long-haired and ambrosial man, who claimed to have been one of those hard riders from the Lone-Star State, who figured so extensively in the cavalry force of the late Confederate army. He was broad-shouldered, tall, swaggering, of a military carriage, and claimed to be "still a rebel and a fighting man, sir." Now Hanks was not just a Yankee, but he and this child of chivalry soon found means of disagreement upon another matter. The Confederate used often to say that he did not care a profane expletive for Miss Grimes, but he made it a point to allow no man to stand before him in the graces of a livin' woman, sir. So, in a few weeks, Hanks and he looked askance at each other, and finally refused to play poker at the same table, and avoided a mutuality in bibulous exercises by common consent. The wicked Sary, gifted with peculiar insight into such matters, flattered the new beau, and smiled upon him with beams particularly bright; albeit, she divided her favors, and gave Hanks enough to keep him alive to the stature and strength of his rival, and the dangers arising from delay and absence. These things did not pass unnoticed by the others, and a keen look-out was maintained for the hour when the difficulty should culminate. The patient sitters upon benches and the industrious carvers of deal boxes kept the two men in sight, and watched them with an eye to being

present when the time came. They discussed the chances among themselves, much as they discussed the projected race for three hundred yards between Hopkins' bald-face and the spotted pony. They knew Hanks, and generally considered him the better man. There was a slight inclination to prejudice against the Confederate, perhaps. "He's full o' brag," they remarked; "hain't seen his *grit* yet."

One night Father Grimes sat in the inner room of his poor house. The cotton cloth which did duty as glass puffed in and out in the window frame, and the "grease-dip" burned yellow and dim on the edge of its broken cup. There was the usual chatter and coarse laughter in the outer room, and he knew that the Confederate and Sary were there. This gallant gentleman was in his best mood that night, and the laughter of the girl, and the man's tone of light raillery, reached Grimes' wakeful ears with annoying distinctness. The old man sat in his bent posture near the light, and studied out the words of a big worn volume upon his knee. His grizzled hair lay in tangled confusion upon his neck, and as he stumbled through the sentences, he spelled and whispered the words to himself. The night was his enemy and torment. He was passing the dull time of age and affliction, and, withal, gathering comfort from the only book he possessed or needed. It was no common book he pored over and spelled; it is said to have been the Bible.

Presently the outer door opened, and with a gruff salutation Hanks entered. His arrival from his last drive could not have been more than an hour ago. He had not wasted time in paying his respects. He sat down at the rude table, and looked at Sary and her companion. That Hanks was in an ugly humor was quite evident. It was equally evident that he was bent upon the operation known among his kind as "pickin' a fuss." He did not attempt to conceal his feelings, and glowered at his rival, and still sat silent. The dark purpose of the border rowdy was in his eye, and the jealousy and anger of all his lawless kind was apparent in the studied deliberateness of all his actions. The other looked at

him with a cool grin of defiance. At a meeting of this kind, two such men have little need of tongues.

Presently the late-comer rose slowly, moved his chair, and sat down almost in front of his rival. The old man in the inner room heard the movement, and started and listened, closing his book. Having thus changed his position, Hanks placed his hands upon his knees, looked his rival obtrusively in the face and calmly remarked:

"I shouldn't wonder, Mister, ef I thought you was a low-down kind of a cuss."

"What?" exclaimed the Confederate.

"I say—are ye list'nin'?—that I shouldn't wonder ef I thought you was a low-down, sneakin'——"

The Confederate gentleman arose, motioned to Hanks, and moved toward the door. They both went out, walked a little way along the wall toward the old man's flapping window, and stopped.

"I don't do my fightin' in the presence o' wimmen," said the Confederate, "but I'm a fightin' man, an' ye kin hev all ye're spilin' for. There's no use in bein' in a ungentlemanly hurry about this 'ere little diffikilty; to-morrer mornin',—break o' day, sharp, at the sand-bar beyant Stokes's, 'll suit me, ef *you* kin stand it."

"Wot's yer weepins," said the other.

"Navy size—ten paces."

"Seconds?"

"Nary man."

"I'll be thar;" and Old Grimes heard the footsteps die away in opposite directions.

He hobbled into the room where his daughter sat. Her pinky cheeks were a little paler, and there was an unwonted apprehension in her eyes. "Sary," he said, "kin ye do nothin' to keep them two young fellers apart?"

"No, they're two fools, an' it's none of my affair."

"Did ye hear what they said outside?"

"Yes, I heard; I was list'nin'; they kin fight it out. There's better men than either of 'em."

Grimes turned and went back to his little bare room —the little bare and shabby place where the company who came and sat with him were not inhabitants of

Slabtown,—and seated himself upon the bed, and communed with himself. It is a strange life, and a wonderful education, that can teach a red-cheeked and hoydenish girl to smile at the passions which lead to the grim revenges of the border. The old man sat and thought, and the hours passed slowly. He lay down upon the rude bed, and perhaps would have slept if he could. Then he rose and occupied himself in reading again, and went out often and looked into the shadows of the still night. Only the far guard-challenge fell upon his ear at intervals, and seemed to announce the passing hours. Finally the ripe stars that glow in the noon of night began to pale in their westward setting. The cocks crew, and the lowing of kine was borne far upon the damp morning air. The day was coming.

No soul, save these two men, a thoughtless woman, and an old man almost helpless, knew of the meeting on the sands, from which but one, and probably neither, would ever return. Father Grimes got his hat and staff, and hobbled forth. He thought he knew the spot, he would go thither.

The chill air of dawn pierced his frail body, and he shivered. Painfully, and all too slowly, he walked the stepping-stones across the puny torrent, and toiled up the bank upon the other side. He saw the gray streaks in the east, and hastened, groaning, for he remembered the words "at break o' day, sharp." His journey was a pathless one, cactus-grown and tangled with long grass. Finally he reached the crest of the low bluffs, and the little acre of brown sand lay before him in the growing light. Peering with his old eyes, he discovered two figures there. One of them stood listless, while the other paced slowly across a little space; then his companion measured the space likewise, in long and swinging strides. As the old man drew nearer, he saw that the two took opposite places, and that, while one leaned forward anxiously, the other's attitude was careless and his weapon-hand hung by his side. He shouted with the utmost strength of his old, wiry voice, but they seemed to pay no heed. Then, and for the first time in ten years, he tried to run. As he drew closer, he saw

that Hanks was nearest to him, and almost between him and the tall Confederate. Then one said "*Ready*," and his adversary answered "Ready." But Grimes noticed that Hanks held his weapon in readiness to fire, while the other brought his slowly up from his side.

The thought must have passed through his mind like a flash, "If I could but push one of them aside, I could save them." But already they had begun to count, slowly and simultaneously: "*one—two——*" and at the word "*two*," Hanks dropped suddenly in his place, and two shots awoke the silence almost together. The tall Confederate stood still a moment, then staggered, and fell backward, while a crimson stream trickled slowly out upon the brown sand, and sank, leaving the stain of murder beside his stark figure, as he lay, with open, staring dead eyes, looking at the glowing sky.

Hanks had dropped suddenly in his place, and had fired before the word. It was the trick which almost disgraces the Comanche from whom he had in a manner acquired it. He now rose up and looked around him furtively. In the sunshine of high noon it was a dreary and silent spot; and now in the purple morning, with the dead man lying as he had fallen, with the brown sand, and the sage, and the gaunt and thorny cactus on every hand, Hanks seemed to shiver, as he buttoned his coat, and looked nervously around, and stood a moment thinking. Then, by chance or through fear, he cast a glance behind him, and saw Father Grimes sunk down in a heap with his head fallen forward upon his bosom. Perhaps he thought the old man dead;—at least he had caught the bullet meant for himself. He hesitated a moment, looked around the horizon, and then, moved by sudden fear, walked rapidly away through the stunted trees beyond the sand. This tale chronicles no further the wanderings of the assassin: he never returned.

Father Grimes slowly raised his head by-and-by, pressed his hand to his side, and tried to rise. After a while they came and bore him to his cabin, and placed him upon his bed. For ill news travels quickly, and the curiosity of the hard community had quickly hurried

a crowd to the spot. While he lay quietly and looked upward through the cabin roof, calm and placid, the post-surgeon came, and the commandant, and even the chaplain, and the crowd gathered at the outer door, only parting to permit the passage of another burden which was borne there by chance or a fancied connection with Grimes and his daughter, and laid upon a low bench beside the wall, crying murder through the hush with its white, uncovered face.

They questioned the old man, and brokenly and at intervals he told them all he knew. No, no, not all; for his mind seemed preoccupied, and at intervals he stopped and lay very quiet, looking at something they could not see, and smiling as he feebly held out his hand. His careworn and pain-burdened life was passing fast. That they knew, and were awed in the presence of that Death so many of them had courted, so many had pretended to scorn. They watched him, and waited to hear if he had aught else to tell. A little while passed in silence. Suddenly he opened his eyes again, and looked intently toward a corner of the room. It was not a look of scrutiny, doubt, or inquiry, but of happy certainty and surprise. A faint flush stole into the pallor of his old face; his eye brightened, and he stretched forth his hand and tried to lift himself upon his arm. The doctor bent over him (the chaplain had gone home again), and asked him what he would have. The old man turned with a look of surprise, and pointed with his finger.

"Don't you see Him?" he said.

"I see no one;—what is he like?"

"I—I don't know. His face shines, and He smiles. It is like Him as He walked on the sea. I wonder—you don't suppose—do you?—he can have come so far for *me?*"

And death sealed upon the scarred and wrinkled face its last beatitude. They went out and left him there, and closed the door. And as they passed through the outer chamber, they saw the girl sitting by the bench beside the wall, and looking with tearless eyes afar off, while she held in her lap her dead lover's cold right hand.

The delicate fancy of Alphonse Daudet lends a charm to the simplest incident which he chooses to describe. This sketch has been translated for ROMANCE by Emilie Mettey.

THE *SOUS-PRÉFET* IN THE GROVE.

MONSIEUR the sous-préfet is on his round. Coachman in front, footman behind, the carriage of the sous-préfecture carries him away majestically to the county fair of La Combe-aux-Fées. For this memorable occasion, Monsieur the sous-préfet has put on his embroidered coat, his opera-hat, his tight pantaloons with silver bands, and his gala sword with mother-of-pearl hilt. On his knees rests a large, goffered, Persian morocco portfolio, which he looks at sorrowfully.

Monsieur the sous-préfet looks at his goffered Persian morocco portfolio sorrowfully; he is thinking of the famous speech that he is expected to make presently before the inhabitants of La Combe-aux-Fées.

"Gentlemen and dear citizens. . . ." he torments the blonde silk of his whiskers, and repeats twenty times in succession, "Gentlemen and dear citizens. . . ." It is all in vain, the rest of the speech will not come.

The rest of the speech will not come. It is so warm in this carriage! As far as the eye can reach, nothing is to be seen on the road to La Combe-aux-Fées but the rising of dust under the hot sun of the South. The air is burning, and upon the dusty elms that border the road, thousands of locusts call to each other, from tree to tree. . . . Suddenly, Monsieur the sous-préfet started. Yonder, at the foot of the hillside, he has just seen a little grove of green oaks which seems to beckon to him.

The grove of green oaks seems to beckon to him: "Come this way, Monsieur the sous-préfet, you would be more comfortable to compose your speech under my trees. . . ." Monsieur the sous-préfet is fascinated by it, he alights from his carriage and tells the coachman

to wait for him, he is going to compose his speech in the grove of green oaks.

In the grove of green oaks there are birds, violets, and springs under the tender grass. When they saw Monsieur the sous-préfet, with his beautiful breeches, his goffered portfolio, the birds were frightened and stopped their singing; the spring did not dare to make any more noise; and the violets hid in the turf.

All these little people had never seen any sous-préfet; they ask each other, in whispering tones, who this handsome lord with silver breeches, walking in the grove, could be.

In a whisper under the shady trees, they ask each other who this handsome lord with silver breeches could be. Meanwhile, Monsieur the sous-préfet, delighted with the silence and the freshness of the wood, lays his hat on the grass and, holding the lappels of his coat, sits down on the moss at the foot of a young oak tree; then he opened his large goffered Persian morocco portfolio upon his knees, and drew a large sheet of official paper from it.

"It is an artist," says the warbler. "No," says the bullfinch, "it is not an artist, since he wears silver breeches; I think it is a prince."

"I think it is a prince," says the bullfinch. "Neither an artist nor a prince," broke in an old nightingale which sang the whole season in the garden belonging to the sous-préfecture; "I know what it is, it is a sous-préfet!" And the whole grove goes whispering, "It is a sous-préfet, it is a sous-préfet!" "How bald he is!" exclaims a lark with a large crest. "Is it wicked, a sous-préfet?" inquire the violets.

"Is it wicked?" inquire the violets. The old nightingale answers, "Not at all." And on this assurance the birds resumed their singing, the springs their running, and the violets exhaling their perfume as if the gentleman were not there.

Impassive in the midst of this petty disturbance, Monsieur the sous-préfet invokes in his heart the muse of agriculture, and, his pencil raised, begins to declaim

with his voice of ceremony, "Gentlemen and dear citizens."

"Gentlemen and dear citizens," says the sous-préfet in his voice of ceremony. . . . A burst of laughter interrupts him; he turns around and sees nothing but a woodpecker perched on his opera-hat and laughing at him. The sous-préfet shrugged his shoulders and tried to continue his speech, but the woodpecker interrupted him again and cried, "What is the use?" "How! what is the use?" said the sous-préfet flushing; and sending away this impertinent creature with a gesture, he resumed louder than ever, "Gentlemen and dear citizens. . . ."

"Gentlemen and dear citizens," he said louder than ever; just then all the violets lifted up their heads and, bending toward him, said softly, "Monsieur the sous-préfet, do you smell how fragrant we are?" And the springs under the moss played some divine music for him, while in the branches above his head a lot of warblers came and sang their sweetest songs. The whole grove conspired to hinder him from composing his speech.

The whole grove conspired to hinder him from composing his speech. . . . Monsieur the sous-préfet, intoxicated with perfume, carried away by the music, tried in vain to resist the new charm which was taking hold of him. He rested his elbow on the grass, opened his beautiful coat, stammered once, twice, three times, "Gentlemen and dear citizens . . . gentlemen and dear cit. . . . Gentlemen . . . and . . . dear" . . . then he threw citizens and all to the wind, and alas! the muse of agriculture must veil her face.

Veil thy face, O muse of agriculture! An hour later when the men of the sous-préfet, anxious about their master, entered the grove, they witnessed a sight which made them start back with horror. Monsieur the sous-préfet was lying flat on the grass, his coat beside him, his chest all uncovered like a gypsy—Monsieur the sous-préfet was writing verses while chewing violets.

Miss Jacquita, with her airs, recalls Mrs. Burnett's "Pretty Sister of José." Such young women are too cross and contrary to be worthy of the good fortune which too often awaits them. But beauty, like charity, covers a great deal. The story was written for ROMANCE by Raymond Hunt.

JACQUITA OF MINORCA.

MIDWAY between Europe and Africa, its shores washed by the blue waters of the Mediterranean, lies the little island of Minorca. Out of the beaten line of travel, overlooked by energetic tourists, it holds its only direct communication with civilization through "tramp" steamers and an occasional yacht.

Minorca has well-nigh forgotten the outside world, and, with true southern indolence, dreams over its own petty interests unless wakened to sudden but evanescent activity by some event out of the common.

The largest city, Port Mahon, clambers up and down the cliffs of its lovely harbor in an aimless way, and, on first approaching, two things strike you: the dazzling whiteness against the intense blue of sea and sky, and the monotony of the flat-roofed, chimneyless houses.

The cobble-paved streets are marvellously clean, and the people, in their quaint, gay costumes, stand out with picturesque effect against the stuccoed walls which line the way.

On a cliff overhanging the harbor and the city, is a plaza, called the "Alameda," where a few ilex trees afford a grateful shade. On one of the low stone benches many a pleasant hour may be dreamed away, watching the shadows chase each other over the swelling hills and meadows beyond. Now and again the soft wind wafts perfume from the almond blossoms which lie, like flakes of snow, on the bare fields stretching away to the blue water.

One evening, not long ago, a young girl was seated on the low wall, watching the sun sinking in the cloud-

less sky. The usual three-cornered mantilla draped her graceful head, and her long slender fingers toyed with the ends hanging over her shoulders. She represented one of the better class, with the intense southern beauty of the peasant idealized. Her black hair waved off a low forehead, guiltless of the pointed "friz" which disfigures the face of those who ape the Parisian fashion. Her brows were heavy, and her dark eyes, riveted on the harbor below, seemed to reflect the sunset light. She was watching a large yacht,—which, with all sails set, was gliding slowly, like some stately bird, to its anchorage.

The rattling of the anchor-chains roused her, and broke the long silence which she had so persistently maintained with her companion, a young man of Spanish type. A mixture of northern blood lightened his olive complexion and refined his sensuous southern features. His waist was circled by a red sash, and his work-worn hands twisted a bright-colored turban, fashioned from a large handkerchief.

His passionate gaze contrasted strangely with the girl's indifference. "La Bella Jacquita" she was called, and well did she deserve her name! What was he that he should win her, after all?

Jacquita looked up and smiled.

As when the sun, breaking through the clouds, bathes the fields in warmth and light, so did that smile transfigure the girl's fair face.

The distant church-clock struck six. Rising, she drew the folds of her mantilla closer and, lifting her eyes to his, said softly: "A Riverdel, Felipe!"

His gaze met hers; pride—anger—passion in his eyes. Mastering his excitement, he spoke: "Jacquita—be careful—! I am not like those silly lads who come and go at a girl's nod. To-day have I offered you my life, my heart! A man's dearest hopes and desires have I laid bare. How have you answered?"

He waited. Jacquita pushed the gravel petulantly with her foot, watching the pebbles fly, with a half-mocking smile on her lips. Again he spoke:

"I know you are 'La Bella' of Mahon, but I too have

pride! Keep your scores of admirers, but know that from to-day there is one less—one man more is nothing in the tale of your conquests. You are 'La Bella,' and the man who makes you love him must needs be more than human,—stronger than Felipe. Never again will I be ridiculed, mocked, as I have been to-day!"

Jacquita trembled slightly, but still smiled. She waited, then looking up she said, "Felipe, I am sorry——" but Felipe had gone!

That night Jacquita wept—with fear, excitement and the triumph of having brought Felipe so low as to beg her as he had done that evening. "He will return," thought she. "They always do!"

Next day the party from the yacht made the tour of the town. A little boy of about six years of age was the life and centre of interest of the group. Clad in a sailor suit, his golden curls waving under his white cap, he formed a strong contrast to the dark-skinned children who stared as he passed them by. A pretty blonde girl followed with an elderly gentleman, and as she went along, Jacquita, seeing her exquisite fairness, thought: "The angels must look like that!"

All that day Felipe came not, and the speech of gentle reproof which Jacquita had prepared was not delivered. She began to wonder whether she had better accept him. The fun would then be over, but—supposing the other thing! Life would be as nothing with Felipe left out!

Evening came and found Jacquita and her mother seated at their door, conversing with the neighbors, leaning out of window or strolling past. The "summer-winter," as they call our "Indian summer," lingered late that year.

A group gathered,—among them Francesca, the rival beauty. She was larger in every way than Jacquita. To many she was more attractive—being less chary of her brilliant smiles and jests.

"Hast heard the news?" she was saying. "As the 'Inglesi' were walking back to the yacht this afternoon, down on the quay, the little boy, catching sight of a large dog ahead, ran after him along the edge of

the water. Suddenly 'Ah, Santissima Maria!' he cried out,—and then the water closed over him! Felipe was there and jumped in after him. There was no danger," she added, glancing maliciously at Jacquita's pale face,—"and in a moment more he was being embraced by the pretty young lady. But Felipe!—Milord overwhelmed him with thanks,—offered him money which the fool refused—and finally asked if he knew the sea and would care to come with him as a sailor. For a moment Felipe hesitated, but"—(and here the bright look on Jacquita's face faded)—"he finally said, 'Yes, Milord,' and so he goes to-morrow! Ah, but he is a brave lad, that Felipe, and a lucky one! Some of us will care—but to those who have no hearts"—(and here she glanced coldly at the girl sitting silent beside her) "to those it will make no difference."

Just then Felipe himself sauntered up. There was a difference between this nonchalant young sailor, bearing his honors so lightly, and the passionate lover of the night before. "Good luck, Felipe!" some one called; and Francesca, again the spokeswoman, cried: "Your fame has flown before you, and your good fortune makes us envious."

Felipe turned to Jacquita. She was talking animatedly to a young fellow beside her—seemingly oblivious of all else. Felipe's face darkened; then, laughing, he turned, saying—"Come, friends, let us have a merry time on this our last night together. Come, drink my health and prosperity with me!"

"Si! Si!" they answered.

Jacquita alone declined. She was "too tired," she said haughtily. Francesca, shrugging her shoulders, murmured: "One of her ugly moods! Santissima—what a temper!"

Jacquita listened to the retreating footsteps, and her downcast eyes filled with tears,—why, she would not own to herself. A quick step sounded, a voice said, "Jacquita!" Something—false pride, perhaps, or fear lest Felipe should see her weeping, held down her eyes,—but she smiled.

"Thou didst not say 'Addio,' or even a lucky wish, Jacquita!"

Silence,—then a smothered oath broke from his lips, and ere she could frame the words of farewell still lingering on her tongue, she heard him striding down the street. As he turned the corner, snatches of a waltz—one of Francesca's favorites—came floating back to her.

Early the next morning, while the Alameda yet lay wrapped in sleep, a girl leaned over the sea-wall, gazing with burning eyes at the beautiful boat below. The bustle of departure reached her straining ears, and she saw a rowboat speed out to the ship. A cheer rose from those on shore as with a final pull the anchor was hauled aboard. The broad sails filled slowly, and she slipped away as silently as she had come—away into the purple mists of the morning—away—and bearing with her a whole life's grief and disappointment.

"'La Bella Jacquita' is going daft," cries Francesca as every night the girl walks to the Alameda, watching for a boat that never comes.

One evening she sat gazing at a tramp steamer just anchored. She recalled that other night—and the boat now so far away. Alas for the pride of "La Bella of Mahon"! The setting sun covered her with its golden light. Her dark eyes grew larger with unshed tears; then a voice said softly, "I have come back to see if thou wilt yet say 'Addio,' mia Jacquita!"

There is a vast amount of hard common sense in this domestic drama, done into English from the French for ROMANCE.

THE DOWRY.

I.

THERE was once a time, according to some of our old codes of laws, when a girl's dowry consisted only of a wreath of roses. It is no longer the case now. To-day the question of the dowry is the most important one of the marriage, and causes in various families many funny, sad and touching scenes. It is one of those family scenes that I want to tell you about.

Let us enter into the house of M. Desgranges, an old retired merchant, who lived at Villeneuve Saint Georges, a little town a short distance south of Paris. His daughter Madeleine had been been asked in marriage by a young architect, and the two young people were desperately in love with each other. M. Grandval, however, the young man's father, would not allow his son to marry any one who had not a dowry of 200,000 francs, and M. Desgranges would only give his daughter 100,000. His wife urged him to give the amount needed; his daughter implored him; but he remained inflexible. Mme. Desgranges belonged to that class of soft-hearted mothers who cannot speak of their daughters without tears in their eyes, so she begged and insisted, until at last, seeing that she made no impression on her husband, she rose and said with indignation:

"M. Desgranges, do you wish to know what I think of you? I think you are a man devoid of heart and feeling."

"I know it, my dear."

"You are not a father, you are a——"

"An executioner," he supplied theatrically.

> "Bourreau de votre fille, il ne vous reste enfin
> Que d'en faire à sa netre un horrible festin."
>
> *Iphigénie*, Acte III.

"Monsieur Desgranges!"

"Madame Desgranges!"

"Do you know, Monsieur Desgranges, that with your phlegmatic irony you will soon succeed in making me crazy, in making me lose my temper entirely!"

"If you have not already lost it!"

"This is too much, sir; I can stand no more!"

"Dear mother, enough, enough!" said Madeleine, rising from her seat. "I do not wish to be the cause of any disagreement between you and my father, and since he does not wish to grant our request, since he refuses to do what we are so anxious for, that which would make the happiness of Henry and myself——" She stopped and burst into tears.

"She weeps!" cried Madame Desgranges. "Oh, my daughter! My dear little daughter! Does not even this move you, monster? Can you see her tears, and hear her say in her gentle voice that you could make her happy, and remain obdurate?"

"What do you expect, my dear?" said her husband. "Whenever I see a woman in tears, I am on my guard."

"What do you mean?"

"It is not my fault, I can assure you," said he. "When we were first married, you wept so often, when you wanted me to do anything for you, that women's tears now always have the effect of making me obstinate."

"Oh! my father, my father!" cried Madeline, "can you doubt the sincerity of my grief? Do you not believe that I love Henry? He is so good and sensible, and you say yourself that his prospects as an architect are very good."

"That is all true."

"His father, M. Grandval, is a——"

"A most honorable man."

"Well then?"

"Yes, well then," interrupted Madame Desgranges, "Why not let her marry him?"

"I have not the least objection. I give my hearty consent, and with my consent one hundred thousand francs as her dowry. But not the two hundred thousand, which Monsieur Grandval demands."

"And why not?" asked Madame Desgranges.

"Because I am not rich enough to give it to my daughter without inconveniencing myself."

"You will still have enough left to live comfortably on."

"To have simply enough is too little."

"At your age," said Madame Desgranges, "one has not many wants."

"On the contrary, each year brings new ones. Each infirmity is an extra expense. My sight fails; I need glasses. My limbs become feeble; I need a carriage. My hair falls out; I need a wig. As for the overshoes and flannels, they are a constant expense. Why, last year I spent 100 francs on flannels alone."

"But——" began his wife.

"No! No!" said he. "Let youth be poor. That is fair; that is its fate. Has it need of anything then? Does it need a luxurious home and fine suppers? But old age!"

"You are not old," said Madame Desgranges tenderly.

"Oh, if you begin to flatter me, it becomes serious!"

"Come, come," she began in a joking manner, "let us argue the point amiably. What does a little economy in our daily life amount to? One servant less, for example."

"Precisely!"

"Well, so much the better!"

"So much the worse, I think. I am lazy and like to be waited on."

"You are getting too lethargic and fat. If you waited a little more on yourself, you would remain active and young."

"I do not agree with you, my dear."

"But it is a fact, and I tell you so for your own interest. Then in regard to our table, we should perhaps have one less course at dinner."

"Well, I confess, I should not like that, as I am something of a gourmand."

"That is a sin, father," said Madeline.

"Perhaps it is, but it is a very agreeable one, and I have not many left. I never see the hour of dinner ap-

proaching without seeing floating before my eyes, like a dream, the menu,—without saying to myself, Ah! I wonder what delicious dish my wife has for me to-day? for I will do you justice, my dear; you have a great deal of ingenuity in getting up dainty sweet dishes."

"Yes, yes," answered Madame D. in a mollified tone, flattered by this compliment to her housekeeping. "But what happens then? You eat too much, and make yourself sick. The doctor has told you that you will suffer from your gluttony one of these days. Now if we had a more simple table, you would keep fresh and healthy, and your head would be clear. You would feel better than you do now."

"Yes, yes, I know, '*mens sana in corpore sano.*'"

"I mean to say that, if you had any common sense, you would be grateful to Madeline for taking her dowry, as it would be the means of prolonging your life in this world and assuring your welfare in the next."

"Oh, father, father!"

"Come," persisted Madame D., seeing that her husband looked as if he were beginning to yield, "I know that you have a good heart, and that all these little privations will be so many delights to you. Will it not be a pleasure to you to bleed yourself for your daughter?"

"Ah, you are alluding to the old legend of the pelican, which is said to tear open its own breast to feed its young. But this has been proved to have no truth in it."

At this moment the young suitor entered. Madeline saw him, ran to him, and taking him by the hand, said:

"Come, Monsieur Henri, come and help us. My father begins to yield to our entreaties."

"I?" said Desgranges.

"Oh! Monsieur Desgranges!" the young man said with emotion.

Monsieur Desgranges turned to him and said, "I am very glad, Henri, to see you. But, my dear young friend, I fear you have no heart. You are beloved by a charming girl, good, well educated and affectionate, and you are not willing to marry her because she has not a dowry of 200,000 francs."

"But, my father," said Madeleine, "he——"

"Do not interrupt me, my dear. When I married your mother she was worth fifty thousand times less than you."

"How!" cried Madame Desgranges.

"I meant to say she had fifty thousand francs less than you will have,—but I did not hesitate."

"Neither do I hesitate," said Henri, becoming very much excited. "It is my father who objects."

"Yes," said Madeleine, "it is his father. He himself thinks nothing about the money. He has told me twenty times that he would marry me if I had not a sou, —that he would rather I had nothing."

"That is true," said the young man.

"Yes, yes, I know,—they all say that. I said it myself, but to myself."

"How?" said Madame Desgranges. "Was it not true then?"

"What is true is, that I find the maxim that fathers should sacrifice themselves for their children a very stupid one."

"Sacrifice yourself?" said Madeleine. "Do I want you to do that? Do either of us wish it? Will not the money still remain with you?"

"Ta, ta, ta! The money cannot be in two places at once. If I give it to you, I lose it. If I do not give it to you, I keep it. That is as clear as day."

"But, father——"

"My mind is made up. A father should always be richer than his children."

"What does it matter, which is the richer?" said Madame D. "Will not their home always be ours?"

"Never! A father should never trust to his children for support,—on their own account, so that they may never be ungrateful."

"Oh, father!" cried Madeline. "How dare you suppose——"

"Is your tender little heart shocked at this word?"

"Yes, indeed. You have hurt my feelings very much."

"I believe it. I believe in the sincerity of your indignation, but——"

"But, sir," said Henri, "what do you take us for?"

"I take you for children with good hearts and full of sentiment, and it is for this reason, that I do not wish to spoil you. Have you ever heard of a play called King Lear?"

"By Shakespeare?"

"Yes. Well, do you want to know my opinion of King Lear? I think him an old idiot who merited his fate. And as to his daughters, Shakespeare, great as he is, has made a mistake, in making them ungrateful from the beginning. He ought to have represented them as becoming gradually spoiled by the foolish indulgence of their father, and led on to ingratitude by the benefits heaped on them. That would have been true to nature, for if the benefits are stopped, there can be no ingratitude. Now, since I have as great a desire for your goodness as my wife has for mine, I refuse absolutely to deprive myself for you, for fear of exposing you to temptation."

"But——"

"There is no but in the question. My decision is final. Henri, go to your father, and try to make him withdraw his demand. It is easier not to ask for one hundred thousand francs than to give them."

"But, father," said Madeline, "suppose he does not succeed in convincing him?"

"Well, it will be a proof that he does not love you very much, and in that case I shall not regret your losing him."

"Monster, egotist!" cried Madame Desgranges.

"So! So!"

"Farewell, Henri!" cried Madeline.

"No, mademoiselle, not farewell, au revoir. Your father is right. I should not be worthy of you, if I could not succeed in winning you."

"Now that sounds well, young man. That makes me respect you. I will not give you an extra sou on account of it, but I respect you. Go, and return quickly."

II.

One month after this scene, the young people were married. A year later, Madame Desgranges was godmother, and the next year Monsieur Desgranges was godfather. Three years having passed, we find the young couple, with their children, settled with the old people at Villeneuve Saint Georges. I have said that M. Henri Grandval was an architect, but a young architect is, alas! too often an architect "*in partibus.*" Of all young artists, architects are surely the most unhappy. No matter how poor a poet is, he can always find a pen with which to write his verses; a musician, a sheet of paper on which to scribble his notes; a painter, a brush and a bit of canvas, on which he can put his ideas for a picture; but dressed stones, and stones rough-hewn for heavy work, and a piece of ground suitable for a building, one cannot get at all times. One does not build houses simply for pleasure, and who is willing to intrust them to a young architect? He has a profession, and no materials to exercise it on. His profession is to build, and he has no buildings to make. Imagine a beaver forbidden to work, and you can have some idea of his feelings. His only patrons are small landowners, who having some crack to fill up, or a window to cut, or a wall to be mended, employ a young architect, as one employs a young doctor for slight indispositions, hoping the charges will be lighter. Such was the fate of Henri Grandval. To make amends to himself for these uninteresting labors, which he called pot-boilers, he employed his time, and his real talents for drawing and painting, in making plans of châteaux; in competing for all the large public buildings; in sending to the proper persons designs of buildings of general usefulness, and as if he were a practical as well as an artistic man, he added to his designs specifications and estimates, sections and plans of interiors, which did the greatest honor to the thoroughness of his studies, but which had the serious inconvenience of costing him a great deal; for he had

to pay the surveyors who measured the ground, the building-surveyors, who measure the quantities of materials, and others. So that he spent in these designs all the money that he made.

His income was sufficient to make him what was called formerly a "Bourgeois de Marais," but not enough for an artist, a man who loved the beautiful! The love of beautiful things is an expensive taste. One hears of a sale of fine antique tapestry,—how hard to resist the pleasure of buying some of it! One reads the description of some wonderful monument recently discovered. Why not go to see it? Studying works of art is a duty with artists. The most dangerous for them, however, are the large advertisements posted on the walls, and bearing in large red letters these cabalistic words: "Thirty days' tour in the north of Italy, with the privilege of staying over in any of the principal cities, only one hundred and fifty francs." That sounds so cheap. Bargains are always dangerous. These large advertisements are as demoralizing as pawnbrokers' shops, and it is all the harder to resist temptations of this sort, because it seems one's duty to succumb to them.

Our young couple, therefore, succumbed to them very often, and if you will remember that Henri was very fond of his wife, and consequently wished her to be always very well dressed, and that in the course of three years they had two children, you will easily understand that, when the second half of each quarter came, they were so "hard up" that they almost broke the heart of good Madame Desgranges, and brought down on the head of Monsieur Desgranges a torrent of abuse and entreaties.

"My dear, I beg of you to increase their income!"

"I shall certainly not do that," answered Monsieur Desgranges. "I am only too well pleased with the way in which I have acted. It is too good to be changed."

"How can you have the heart to see them and to let them be so embarrassed?"

"Are they in debt?"

"Terribly so, my dear husband."

"All the better. My son-in-law will have to try all the harder to get himself more work."

"But he does not seem to succeed in finding it."

"All the more reason that he should work hard to get it."

"Their expenses are constantly increasing."

"You mean their happiness."

Then as Madame Desgranges raised her hands toward heaven, "Come, wife," said he, "let us talk sensibly. Let us suppose that, three years ago, I had given my daughter the extra hundred thousand francs, as you wanted me to do, what would have been the result?"

"The result would have been," said Madame Desgranges, with a mixture of indignation and tenderness, "that instead of their having to suffer privations as they have been obliged to do for the last three years; instead of having been obliged to give up everything——"

"Stop, stop, dear wife! It seems to me——"

"It seems to you! Well, shall I tell you what I think! When I go to see them at dinner-time, and see their little simple dinner, one dish of meat, one kind of vegetable, and no sweet dishes, the poor dears! and when I come home, and find our table loaded with all manner of good things, roast chickens, larded partridges, for you must have them larded nowadays——"

"Well, my dear, why not? I'm growing old."

"Well, I can only say, it makes me sick. I reproach myself for every mouthful I eat."

"Well, I do not."

"I think we are disgusting."

"Wife, wife, be calm, and come back to the point, for you have wandered off from it entirely. Follow my reasoning if you can. It is now the fifteenth of November. Our daughter, our son-in-law, their two children and their two servants, have been here in our country house with us, since the thirteenth of August, which is three months and two days, and they expect to stay with us until we leave on the twentieth of December."

"Well, do you wish to reproach them for staying here?

Are you grumbling at what they cost you? Do you intend to send them away? Come now, stop there."

"Wife——"

"Do you wish to deprive me of the sight of my children, which constitutes my only happiness?"

"Thank you, my dear!"

"Oh, I know you! You find that the children make too much noise. Poor darlings! Their little voices are so sweet, their little ways so cunning!"

"But who says anything to the contrary?" cried Monsieur Desgranges impatiently. "Do let me talk, and once more I beg of you to listen to my reasoning. Why have our daughter and son-in-law stayed with us for three months and four days? And why are they going to stay with us until the twentieth of December?"

"What a question! Because they love us, and are happy with us. Because they know that they give us pleasure. Because they are affectionate, tender-hearted——"

"In fact, just the opposite of what I am. Is it not so?" said Monsieur Desgranges, laughing.

Then going to his wife he said, "Let me embrace you. I adore you, because you will always remain a child!"

"What! a child!"

"I mean to say that you will always be the same good, naïve, credulous, confiding creature that I married with so much pleasure."

"What do you mean? Naïve, credulous?" answered Madame Desgranges, slightly offended. "Do you pretend that our children are not——"

"No, my dear wife, they are all that you say, and more also. But do you really believe that your daughter, who is so pretty that she loves to show herself, because people have pleasure in looking at her,—that your son-in-law, with his artistic tastes and his imagination, would leave Paris and the first pleasures of the winter and make the journey back and forth every day to attend to his business, simply for the pleasure of playing a game of piquet with a father-in-

law who is beginning to grow deaf, and a mother-in-law who is getting to be rather too talkative?"

"But what do you think then? What do you suppose keeps them so long with us?"

"My dear," said Monsieur Desgranges laughingly, "do you remember that, when you were young and had beautiful hair, you were always delighted to go to the country in order not to have to part it, so as to prevent it growing thin on the part? Well, our children are delighted to stay here, in order to give their purse a rest."

"Shameful!" cried Madame Desgranges. "Do you really think——"

"I do not blame them. I do not accuse them of ingratitude, nor indifference. I am sure, that if they had an income of twenty thousand francs, instead of ten, they would still love us, but in a different way. For example, I do not know any son-in-law to be compared to mine. He never lets one of my anniversaries pass without presenting me with an enormous bouquet."

"And you think that their own interest——"

"Oh no, dear wife, not their interest alone, but it is a mixture of affection and calculation,—calculation of which they are not themselves aware, but which I suspect is caused by their need of me, and I profit by it without their knowledge."

"Stop! You are terrible! You debase, you sneer at everything. One must have such sentiments one's self to be able to attribute them to others. It is frightful."

"Not at all. It is quite natural. Old people are very tiresome. They must make up for it in some way. I make up for my tediousness by my hospitality."

"Why do you not say at once that our children look on our house as a hotel?"

"Doubtless they do, the Inn of the Gold Lion. Here is accommodation for horse and man, for children who are 'hard up,' and have to economize. If they have spent too much at the theatre, at balls, at concerts, they go to stay a few days with papa. If they want to pay for a little trip, they spend a month with papa. If one of the children is a little ailing, they take him to the

country to stay with papa. As they are received with open arms; as everything is paid for them; as papa has a good establishment and a good table; as they find all sorts of good things to eat, which the egotistical father is enchanted to share with his children, they come and come again and stay with pleasure."

"Oh, you miserable creature! You attribute everything to selfishness, even paternal love."

"But suppose, on the contrary," said Monsieur Desgranges, without seeming to hear what his wife said, "suppose that I had doubled my daughter's dowry, as you wished me to do, what would have been the result? Considering my son-in-law's somewhat impulsive disposition, my children to-day would have been no richer, and I should have been much poorer. I should not have been able to keep them here so long, nor to entertain them so well, and they would not have come to stay with us so often, because they would have been better off at home. Ah, my dear, if our children were richer than we, my daughter would have found Villeneuve Saint Georges too damp in the autumn on account of the fogs from the river, and would have thought it unhealthy for the children. My son-in-law would have told us that the journey back and forth from Paris every day was too fatiguing for him. This is the advice I give to all fathers whose daughters marry. If you wish to keep your children, keep your money. If you wish to enjoy your grandchildren, keep your money. It is by means of his money that the father remains the head of his family, and his house the family mansion, an honored and comfortable place of rest for the aged; a refuge and a delight to the young people and the little ones, a nest where they find health and happiness, and sometimes more intelligent care than what their own mothers give them. It is, for all, a centre, a sanctuary around which associations gather, and where successive generations live and grow old; where the traditions of respect and tenderness are perpetuated. If you want to call my precaution self-interest, heartlessness, you can do so, but I call it the best kind of fatherly love, which consists in making his children happier and better.

For, believe me, my dear, although my son-in-law may have had the best intentions in the world, without my precautions these good qualities might have remained undeveloped. He owes their full development to me. The moral of all this is, that I will not add one sou to the dowry of my daughter."

III.

It is now the thirtieth of November. The scene is still at Villeneuve Saint Georges. The family of Monsieur Desgranges is a very happy one. He has never seemed so gay and happy. It is the twenty-fifth anniversary of his marriage.

"My dear," he said to his wife, "this is a day which should be celebrated in a dignified manner. There must be no question of economy to-day. Everything must be in the very best style. Let us have a dinner to suit a gourmand (for you know you consider me one). I have told my daughter, who has gone to spend a day in Paris, for some reason that I do not know, that she and her husband must return by the four-o'clock train. She will find in her room a pretty new dress, which I wish her to wear to-day. For yourself, in order to prove that you still love me a little, in spite of all my faults, wear at dinner and in the evening, at the little party we are to have, the diamonds belonging to my poor mother. They represent to me all that I have loved the most in the world,—she who gave them to me for you; you, who have worn them for my sake and hers, and our daughter who wears them for the sake of all of us." Monsieur Desgranges turned away to hide his emotion.

Why did not Madame Desgranges answer him? Why did she remain for some time immovable with her eyes cast down? Why, when her daughter returned, did she take her weeping into her room? Why was Henri so sad? Why did the announcement of dinner make them all shudder? Why, on entering the dining-room, was the mother so troubled at the sight of her husband?

When he saw her, he exclaimed, "What! you have not put on your diamonds?"

For her only answer, his wife threw herself weeping into his arms. His daughter fell on her knees at his feet, and covered his hands with kisses.

"You have not the diamonds?" he said. "What then have you done with them?"

His wife and children were silent.

"You do not answer?" said he in a severe tone. "It is then my turn to speak. I know everything. You have sold them! Sold them to pay for the imprudence of your son-in-law. Yes, because he wished to go into a badly managed speculation; because he has been foolish enough to become security for the rogues who have deceived him; you have considered it necessary in order to pay the half of his debt (for he still owes 12,000 francs) to sell the dearest souvenir of my poor mother; the most precious treasure of our love; to poison the joy of this happy day. Oh! it is terrible!"

His wife endeavored to murmur some excuses.

"It is sufficient!" interrupted Monsieur Desgranges. "Here are the servants. Let us sit down."

The mother and children took their places in silence at the table. As Madame Desgranges opened her napkin, she uttered a cry of joy. Her son-in-law did the same, and both rushed to Monsieur Desgranges, their eyes filled with tears.

The mother had found her jewel-box with her diamonds in it under her plate; Henri, the 12,000 francs he needed to pay his debt.

"Ah, my dear husband!"

"My dear father!"

"Enough, enough!" said Monsieur Desgranges, breaking away from their embraces. "You will not, I hope, call me egotistical any longer. Was I right now, in my caution? And do you understand now why a father should always be richer than his children, in order that he may be able to come to their aid in a critical moment, and save them from a terrible catastrophe? Only, my dear son-in-law, do not get into debt again, for I cannot afford to repeat my gift."

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OPPOSITE GRACE CHURCH.

The author of the following sketch, Mr. Arthur Beardsley Mitchell, asserts that its characters, and especially its hero, are drawn from real life. In their portrayal, he has certainly made a most realistic presentment; it well sets off the romantic tales which form a prominent feature of this issue. The story has been written for ROMANCE.

"FOOL LONNIE."

"No, he didn't!" cried the Widow Temple hotly. "He didn't mean any harm. If he'd 'a' been let alone, he wouldn't 'a' done any either."

"I hadn't understood, Mrs. Temple," began Sheriff Blatchford blandly, "that anybody touched him at Barry's."

"Maybe they didn't touch him, but they hurt his feelin's, an' sometimes that is worse than bein' hit somewhere."

"Yes," interpolated a pink-faced, flaxen-haired girl, who sat close beside the Widow Temple, as though to give her both moral and physical support, "those Barry children have just made faces at Lonnie, and hooted at him, and called him 'Fool Lonnie' for a year or two now, every time he went by there,—and he spleens against it,'—and so would you, Mr. Blatchford,—or anybody else." The girl was evidently strongly wrought up. Her sweet lips trembled like the wild columbine, the color of which they bore, and the blush on her rounded cheeks came and went as she talked.

"But he doesn't control himself when he gets angry, Miss Idalia,—that's the trouble. He broke up that wheelbarrow like kindling-wood. There's no knowing what damage he might have done, if Mr. Barry hadn't happened to come around. They think Lonnie'd oughter be shut up at the expense of the town,—if you don't feel able to bear it yourself,—but they don't think he oughter be going round free so."

"Well, he had, Mr. Blatchford," returned the Widow Temple with spirit. "He's jest as harmless, when he's

used right, as you or I be. I don't pretend he's as smart as other folks,—I know he ain't,—but there ain't a peaceabler boy in town,—an' Idalye 'll tell you so, too,—than he is when he ain't put upon,—an' he don't always pay back then,—not by any means."

"But anybody would get angry with those Barry children, Mr. Blatchford," put in the girl eagerly. "They're just as spoiled as they can be. I've had them in school when I taught on Tea Street,—and I had more trouble with them than I did with all the rest put together. If anybody's shut up, it had better be those little scamps. Everybody in the neighborhood is down on them. And Lonnie has almost as much sense as the rest of us, Mr. Blatchford. He takes up the paper and reads it off as sensibly as I do, sometimes. And he is as strong as a horse, and works as steady as any man in town, if he's only looked after a little. He does all the farm-work,—and he carries me to school every morning when I'm teaching,—or comes after me Friday night if I'm where I can't come home every day,—and if you should take him off and shut him up,—why, what would ever become of mother and me?" The girl buried her face in her hands, and burst into a flood of tears. Her mother, too, began to sob, and wiped her eyes on her apron.

The sheriff looked around uncomfortably. He wished that this job had fallen to some one else.

"Ahem!" he began. "Yes,—I know Lonnie isn't—well,—he isn't what you might call a fool, Mrs. Temple,——"

"No, I ain't," broke in Lonnie himself. He had been sitting in sullen silence during the whole conversation, on the other side of the room, with his dull eyes fastened on the floor. Now he was looking up and the color was mounting to his face. "I wish you'd stop making my mother feel bad,—and making Idalye cry. Don't cry, Idalye! There!"—pulling a chair up beside the two women, and confusedly trying to stop them,—"I wish you'd go away, Mr. Blatchford. You make them feel bad."

He was a tall and powerful young man of, perhaps, twenty-two or three, with a shock of sandy hair and

whisker which almost concealed his sunburned, but well-featured face. His large, pale-blue eyes, usually almost expressionless, flashed now as he regarded the sheriff. His mother, understanding the need of keeping him especially calmer at this time, ceased weeping and began to pacify him.

"There, there, Lonnie,—no, we won't cry any more. Go an' set down where you was before. Mr. Blatchford ain't to blame, Lonnie. Mr. Barry made him come because you broke that wheelbarrow an' talked so cross to his children."

Lonnie obediently resumed his former seat, and the frown on his face lightened.

"I guess that Barry boy won't make up any more faces at me for one while!" he chuckled. "I broke up his little wheelbarrow, so you couldn't tell what it was made for in the first place."

"That's what's the matter, Lonnie,—don't you understand?" said the sheriff severely. "I'll have to take you up and punish you, if you do such things."

"Those Barry children oughter be whipped," continued Lonnie sulkily. "They plague me. They plague me every time I go by there."

"They will stop if you don't hurt them."

"I don't hurt them. I never did anything to them until they called me bad names. Mother and Idalye didn't tell you half the bad names they called me. And they do this."

He pushed his already protruding lips forward under his soft, thick beard, and distorted his whole face.

"Well, Mrs. Temple,"—the sheriff rose as though his decision had been taken,—"I'm very sorry about this. With one or two exceptions, I never knew of Lonnie's doing anything malicious before,—not anything of any account,—and I should be sorry to have to send him off to an asylum. As you say, Miss Idalia, it would make it very hard for both of you. But you must promise to look after him closer than you have heretofore,—and I suppose you'll have to pay for the wheelbarrow."

The widow turned pale, but her daughter, whose pink

cheeks had also lost their color, did not allow her mother to speak. "Very well," she said proudly, "and my brother will not trouble anybody in this way again."

"I like to ride in the horse-cars," broke in Lonnie, some stray wave of memory seeming to creep suddenly over him. "I went to the city once, and I rode in the horse-cars, and I liked it."

"Sh—sh!" murmured his sister nervously. The sheriff looked at him blankly, shook his head, and took his leave.

"You mustn't get out of patience with Lonnie when he says such queer things," chided the mother, in an undertone, to her daughter, when the sheriff had passed out of sight. "You know he ain't grown any older since he was twelve years old,—not in his mind. He can't help it."

"Oh, yes," assented the girl wearily. "Don't talk about it any more. I'm going up to my room to bathe my face. I'll be down presently." Her mother watched her slight form disappearing up the stairs, and heaved a deep sigh. Then she turned back to the pleasant kitchen, and began to lay the cloth for supper, talking meanwhile to Lonnie, who still sat listlessly in his former place.

"Now don't you never let me hear of your breaking a little boy's wheelbarrow,—nor anything else, Lonnie Temple," she began reprovingly,—"a great, big boy like you. Why, you're six feet tall, Lonnie, an' dretful big an' strong. Now you must promise you won't,—an' you always keep your promises to mother, you know."

"The Barry boy called me names," reiterated Lonnie sullenly.

"It don't make any difference what they do,—you mustn't hurt them nor their things. Now you must promise me,—or else Mr. Blatchford'll take you off an' shut you up in an asylum."

"I don't want to be shut up in an asylum," whimpered Lonnie.

"Well, then, you must promise to be good to little children, an' not take their things. An', 'specially,

you want to be sure an' go on the other road, so as not to go by the Barry house."

"I did,—ever since you told me, I went round by the other road. I like to go round by the other road. Mr. Doane's house is on it, and I like to go in there and ask Mary Doane to please get me a glass of water."

"You didn't do that?" gasped his mother in dismay.

"Yes, I did, too. I did it yesterday and day before."

"Why, Lonnie, you mustn't. If you want any water, you must get it at home. Folks'll think you're a regular nuisance. They don't like to be jumpin' up 'n gettin' water for folks."

"They did like it," insisted Lonnie simply. "They laughed to me, and I told them, 'Hear the robins sing,'—and they said, 'Why, he knows that is a robin,'—and I said, 'Of course I do. Did you think I was a fool?'—and then we all laughed."

"What else did they say?" inquired his mother suspiciously.

"Oh, not much,—but I smiled at them, and Mrs. Doane and Mary both smiled at me."

"Well, at any rate, you didn't smash up any wheelbarrows there," reflected his mother, half-aloud.

"If anybody smashed up Mr. Doane's wheelbarrow, I would—I would kill him!" cried Lonnie, springing from his chair. He straightened up his powerful figure threateningly.

"What's the matter?" asked Idalia, hurrying downstairs.

Her mother briefly sketched the recent conversation, and then turned reprovingly to Lonnie.

"You mustn't talk about killin' folks, Lonnie! It's awful! You mustn't! They'll surely shut you up if you do. Oh, me!" she groaned, turning pitifully to her daughter, "to think what Lonnie might 'a' been, if he only hadn't 'a' fell on the ice that slippery day an' hurt his head so! Seems sometimes as if I couldn't bear it another day."

"But I don't want anybody to smash Mr. Doane's wheelbarrow," pursued Lonnie whiningly.

"There, there!" said his mother in a soothing tone,

"nobody's goin' to. I didn't mean anything—but I 'spose it's no use tryin' to explain it to you. There's one thing you *can* understand, though, Lonnie. You must be a good boy and mind mother and Idalye."

"Yes, I do," whimpered the man, stroking his yellow beard and looking appealingly from his mother to his sister. "I 'most always do mind you, don't I, mother."

"Yes, you do, Lonnie," said his sister warmly, "there isn't a better boy than you are at home, in this whole town,—and mother and Idalia love you dearly.—Mother, why don't you have some of that nice cheese. There's a big slice down cellar,—I'd just as soon get it,—well, if you'd rather, all right,—but, Lonnie, you mustn't run around to the neighbors'. You can't understand it,—but sister does,—and it won't do. Why, if you get to hangin' round Mary Doane's, that Lem Harris will be after you."

"I thought Lem Harris used to like you best," said Lonnie tentatively.

"Nonsense!" laughed Idalia, coloring furiously. "Who would have thought of your getting that idea! Anyhow, he likes Mary Doane now, and the minister is going to marry them pretty soon,—or that's what everybody says, and Mary doesn't deny it."

"Going to the minister's?" queried Lonnie.

"Why, yes,—or else the minister will come to them. The minister is going to marry them, of course. Just think, mother,"—as Mrs. Temple reappeared with a plate of cheese,—"Lonnie didn't know that the minister married people!"

"Well, how should he?" retorted Mrs. Temple. "There hasn't been a wedding around here for years and years,—and he wouldn't have been there, likely, if there had been."

"Ain't supper 'most ready, mother?" asked Lonnie anxiously. He could not talk of anything long at a time.

"The tea ain't quite drawed yet. You go an' fill up the wood-box, Lonnie. It'll be ready by the time you get through. I declare it's cool as September nowadays,—an' here it's only the middle of August."

Lonnie rose obediently. As he went out, he muttered, "A bee stung me once, and it hurt."

"Stung him once!" repeated his mother, looking at Idalia helplessly. "If he's been stung once, he has been five hundred times. What do you suppose set him off on that!"

The girl's fair face darkened. She turned silently to the window, and drummed listlessly upon the small, old-fashioned pane. She was young, but the mysteries of life were already pressing hard upon her.

Early in the evening she went to bed. The excitement of the day had tired her. She left Mrs. Temple mending beside the lamp, while Lonnie whittled aimlessly into the wood-box.

They sat quietly enough after the girl had kissed them good-night, until Lonnie said suddenly, "Doesn't Idalye want to marry Lem Harris?"

"What a question!" exclaimed Mrs. Temple, dropping the stocking which she was darning. "What under the sun put that into your head?"

"Well," said Lonnie evasively, "she went to the picnic last summer with him."

"So she did," admitted Mrs. Temple, "but that was a year ago. Lots of changes take place in a year, especially among young folks."

"I don't think he oughter marry Mary Doane," persisted Lonnie, "I think he oughter marry Idalye. Then Idalye wouldn't have to teach school."

"Idalye likes to teach school a sight better than Mary Doane does," laughed his mother, "and now Mary Doane won't have to teach school,—so it's six of one and half-a-dozen of the other."

The young man muttered something under his breath, which his mother could not hear, but at last he ceased his whittling, and stumbled off to bed, first kissing her dutifully. That was something which he never forgot. He loved her and his young sister very dearly, and so far as his poor, darkened understanding allowed it, he served them faithfully.

Two or three days later, Idalia went over to visit Mary Doane, who was a pretty, pleasant girl, and had

always been her intimate friend, since they had learned their letters side by side in the primer class at the district school. That night, while Lonnie was out doing the chores, she and her mother sat in the twilight after the tea-dishes had been put away, and talked over the news.

"And she finally owned up that she was going to marry Lem, did she?" inquired Mrs. Temple sharply. "I should think she might have told you before,—intimate as you have always been."

"Well, it seems they thought they might have a long engagement. That's why they have kept it so still. I expect I should myself. You don't want all creation talking about it for two or three years. Now Lem's got a good, steady place over at the Mills. He comes to see her every Sunday,—but he generally comes around by the other road. That's why we haven't seen him any oftener. She really did think of teaching over at the Plums. It wasn't all talk. Now she says I may have the Plums, if I want to, and then I can come home every night. What do you think?"

"You don't get any more pay?"

"No, just the same."

"I like to have you at home as much as you can be, of course, Idalye. But how do you feel, yourself?"

"I'd rather stay over to the Hollow, I guess." The girl blushed vividly.

"You don't mean——" began her mother eagerly.

"Yes, I do, mother. I might as well tell you, but you mustn't breathe a word. We aren't really engaged yet, and I am going to treat Mary Doane just as badly as she treated me. Yes, it's that young lawyer that I told you about. His folks live over there, you know,—they own the biggest farm at the Hollow,—and he's just the very nicest fellow anywhere around here,—a thousand times nicer than Lem Harris,—but he's going to settle out West. I knew you'd think there was something up, when I had all those letters. Don't look so worried, mother. It won't be for a year yet. I've said that. I don't want to be married till I'm twenty, and I shan't be till March, you know. But I haven't told

Phil about Lonnie, and his folks don't seem to know anything about him. It's only twenty miles over there, you know,—and I thought they would find out somehow,—but they haven't,—and, oh, I hate to tell him!"

"'Tain't anybody's *fault*," began Mrs. Temple defensively, after a long pause.

"I know that," rejoined Idalia wearily, "and Lonnie'd be so handsome and nice, if he only hadn't met with that awful accident. As it is, he's the kindest, gentlest boy I ever saw,—ain't he, mother?—and just as innocent and good as if he was a church-member. I'm sorry he's been bothering the Doanes. He's been there twice since you told him not to. I guess I shall have to talk to him myself. Just to think, he never can go to any of our picnics and parties,—and how good he has always been about it! It just about breaks my heart. But of course nobody'd ever wants to go with an—idiot——"

"Idalye!" cried her mother tremulously. "Don't call him that!"

"Well,—it's what everybody does call him, mother, —and, of course, it's what he is. We might as well face it. That's what I'll have to tell Phil. Oh, I hope he won't mind so very much!"

"Well," said her mother practically, "I hope I'll live as long as he does, so as to make a home for him."

The girl shuddered.

"Oh, mother, I hope so!" she cried sharply. "And don't on any account let him think I'm engaged. He would be sure to let it out. It's funny how he has got a fancy into his head that I cared for Lem Harris. I never did,—not a red cent!—But I am so sorry that people are getting to be afraid of Lonnie. That's the chief thing which worries the Doanes. 'You don't think he'll hurt us,' Mrs. Doane said to me,—and I said, 'Mercy, no! He wouldn't hurt a fly.' And then she went on about how terrible he had looked down there at the Barrys'. Of course he did. I'm not so very sorry, for my part."

"Well, you oughter be," reproved Mrs. Temple earnestly. "Don't you let Lonnie hear you talk that

way, Idalye. It's been the worst thing for all of us that ever happened. I'd have done anything to prevent it,—even if those children did deserve to be scared."

"Oh, yes, of course," apologized Idalia soberly. "I know all that. But he won't do anything more."

"I'm not so sure of that," returned Mrs. Temple, with an anxious look on her face. "He don't act real natural to me nowadays. He's restless,—an' he never used to be,—an' he seems to be thinkin' an' mutterin' to himself more'n I ever heard him before. He acts to me as if he was tryin' to puzzle somethin' out."

At this moment they heard Lonnie's footsteps. He was bringing in the milk. They could not talk any more that night.

The next day was Sunday, and, as is so often the case after a period of uncommon coolness in the summer, a hot wave had settled over the country. The Widow Temple and her children usually attended church with unvarying regularity, and to-day was their pastor's first Sunday after his return from his summer's vacation: but the heat was so intense, and they all felt so depressed after the occurrences of the week, that they decided to stay quietly at home.

They had just finished their late breakfast, when a carriage stopped suddenly at a fork of the road a few rods below the Temples', and a young man alighted from it. Some one in the carriage said, "Good-by, Lem. Be here about half-past five this evening, and I'll carry you back." The young man walked rapidly past the farm-house, and on in the direction of the Doanes'. He was jauntily smoking a cigar, and lifted his hat gayly to Mrs. Temple and Idalia as he went by. He was slim and good-looking.

"I wonder where Lem Harris is going," remarked Lonnie, with dull suspicion.

"Why, he's going to see Mary Doane, of course," returned Idalia. "He goes up there every Sunday, now that he has gone to the Mills to work. You don't generally see him because he goes by the other road. He had a chance to ride to-day, I suppose, so he came this way."

"Don't you know," supplemented Mrs. Temple, a little impatiently, "I told you he was keepin' company with Mary Doane, an' they're goin' to be married, come fall."

"I—I don't believe it," he said, stubbornly. "I think he oughter marry Idalye. He used to keep company with her. She'll feel bad if he don't."

"Oh, you goose! You haven't the least idea what you're talking about!" laughed Idalia good-naturedly. "I'm delighted to have him marry Mary Doane."

He glanced at her suspiciously, and evidently doubted her sincerity, but he said nothing further. His face was flushed and his eyes looked wandering and excited.

"Poor boy!" sighed his mother tenderly. "You are the dearest and best boy in the world, an' mother an' Idalye love you. He is all tired an' hot," she continued, smoothing his tumbled hair. "He has had a hard week,—come an' lie down on the lounge in the parlor. It's nice an' cool in there. Lie down an' go to sleep, —mother's boy,—mother's boy!" The tears fell from her eyes as she laid his unresisting head upon the pillow, but he did not see them. His thoughts seemed to be far away. He lay there all the morning, and much of the time he was asleep. Mrs. Temple and Idalia had hard work to rouse him for dinner.

All of the afternoon Lonnie sat outside of the house, under a great oak tree, watching the lights and shadows on the wooded hills near by, and now and then picking up handfuls of grass and flowers and examining them idly. His mother brought him an old religious newspaper,—for it was true, as Idalia had informed the sheriff, that Lonnie could read, and that he appeared to understand at least a part of what he read. But he did not seem able to confine his thoughts to the paper today, and after glancing at it a few minutes, he threw it aside, and resumed his aimless meditations.

At last, he rose with a serious air, and began to pace back and forth beneath the great tree. He held his head up, and there was a manliness in his bearing and a grave reasonableness in his whole demeanor, which impressed his mother, as she sat not far away, yearn-

ingly watching him. "Oh, if he only hadn't 'a' fell on the ice so," she moaned to Idalia, who was reading beside her, "what a splendid man he would 'a' made! He's better'n half the men as it is," she went on chokingly. "He's good, an' he's industrious. The idea of shuttin' him up in an asylum!"

"Oh, mother, don't!" begged Idalia. "I can't bear to think about it."

She threw her book aside, and a moment later her clear young voice rang out upon the warm summer air, accompanied by the strains of the "instrument," otherwise a cheap melodeon, which was her choicest possession.

The old-fashioned clock struck five just as she went in. Shortly afterward, Lem Harris came around the curve of the road leading from the Doanes'. As he went by, he hesitated a little. Then he paused outright. Mrs. Temple thought that he was perhaps fascinated by Idalia's music,—but he turned on his heel and came through the wooden gate to the spot where Mrs. Temple was sitting. She rose uneasily to receive him.

"I wish, Mrs. Temple," he began in a low voice,—and glancing cautiously at Lonnie, pacing abstractedly back and forth beneath the great tree, "I wish you would contrive to keep Lonnie away from Mrs. Doane's. It bothers them, after his performances at the Barrys'."

"I know it does,—I know it," admitted the widow tremulously. "I didn't know it along at first,—but I mean to stop it right off,—though they needn't be afraid of him, Lem. He wouldn't hurt one of 'em any more'n he would Idalye 'r me."

In spite of Idalia's singing, and softly as they had spoken, the young giant, pacing back and forth three or four rods away, had heard them, and now he came swiftly toward them, with a dark frown upon his face; but he still retained the indefinable air of dignity which he had worn ever since he had begun to walk up and down the greensward.

"What's the matter, mother?" he asked, ignoring almost with *hauteur* the presence of the young man. "What did you say, mother?"

"Never mind, Lonnie," she urged, soothingly. Lem Harris began to edge away.

"What did you say to my mother?" demanded Lonnie, striding after him. The young man attempted to smile, but made a failure of it. "It's of no consequence, Lonnie. Never mind. I guess I'll go now. Good-by."

"But you won't go!" cried Lonnie excitedly, and planting himself directly in front of his visitor. "You won't go till you tell me what is the matter."

"Nothing's the matter!" retorted Lem Harris, plucking up his courage and beginning to grow impatient. "Let me by there. I want to go."

"There is something the matter, too!" Lonnie's voice trembled, and his vast frame was shaking.

"There isn't either!"

"You lie, Lem Harris, you lie!" yelled the idiot, and with the words he raised his powerful hand and felled the young man to the earth.

With a shriek, the distracted mother flung herself between them, and lifted the fallen man from the grass. Idalia came rushing out, her pretty face as white as Lem Harris'. Lonnie did not stir. His eyes were wild and startled. He quivered from head to foot, and seemed utterly bewildered.

"Why, he don't know anything, Lonnie!" exclaimed the widow breathlessly. "I do' know but you've killed him. Here, take 'n carry him in, 'n lay him on the lounge. Oh, me! what did you ever do it for! Now they'll take you away an' shut you up, sure! oh, me,—oh, me!"—and both she and Idalia groaned as they hurried about, getting camphor and other restoratives for the injured man.

They had scarcely entered the house, when Mr. and Mrs. Doane drove by on their way to the early evening meeting. Mrs. Temple saw them, and breathed a prayer of thankfulness that they had not happened along in time to see Lonnie knock down their prospective son-in-law. By this time she had assured herself that it was only a question of a few moments when the young man would revive. Lonnie had struck him

squarely on the forehead. The skin was broken there, and a bump had arisen which was as large as a bird's egg.

"There goes Mr. Doane. Shall I call him!" asked Lonnie, with touching simplicity.

"No,—for pity's sake, no, you crazy boy! Why, they'd have you shut up right away, Lonnie. Lem'll be all right pretty soon,—he's breathin' regular enough now,—an' I don't want anybody to know about this till they have to. They'll know soon enough. Oh, what made you do it, Lonnie?"

"He lied to me," affirmed Lonnie defensively.

"That don't make any difference. You hadn't oughter raise your hand against anybody. He didn't mean any harm. You can't understand anything rightly,—an' you mustn't never get so mad as that again."

"Will they shut me up, Idalye?" he asked pathetically, turning to her as if she might contradict his mother, and give him some hope.

"I'm afraid they will," she answered tearfully.

Lonnie sank into a chair, and a rueful look crossed his vacant face. His mother was chafing Lem Harris' hands, while Idalia was diligently feeding him with spirit-and-water from a tumbler. His forehead was bound up in arnica, his pillow was redolent of camphor, and the two women were rejoiced to feel that his pulse was beating reassuringly.

While they were thus absorbingly occupied, Lonnie stole off and sped like a deer along the road to the Doane farmhouse. The sky was rapidly clouding over, and the air was sultry and oppressive. Faint mutterings of thunder were heard in the distance. It was plain that there was going to be a storm.

The idiot pressed on wildly, unheeding the threatening aspect of the heavens, until he had covered the long half-mile which separated him from the Doanes'. Mary was standing in the doorway, looking up at the ragged clouds. When she saw Lonnie coming, she started a little and made as though she would go in and shut the door, but she finally did not. Indeed, there

was an agonized expression on his face which moved her tender heart to pity.

"Oh, Mary!" he cried, bursting through the gateway and rushing toward her, "you won't let them take me and shut me up, will you?"

"No, no, of course I won't, Lonnie," she answered soothingly. "Come in and sit down till you get your breath,—but you don't want to wait long or else you will be caught in the storm. It is almost time for father and mother to come,—for they will see the storm coming up, I think, and won't stay to the meeting. I'm afraid they will get wet, though, the best they can do."

She sat down and looked at Lonnie. There was something about him to-night,—an eager, bright look, which brought back the face of the boy that he had been before he was hurt,—when he was the best scholar in his class, and full of hope and promise. It made her feel very sad, and a trifle uneasy.

"I don't want to be shut up," he repeated piteously, breathing hard still, but evidently much comforted by her promises.

"Of course you don't," she said cheerfully. "Nobody does,—and there isn't any need of it."

"If a man tells me I lie, I oughter knock him down," pursued Lonnie tentatively.

"Oh, n-no, I guess not," faltered the girl. "I wouldn't knock anybody down, if I was you. It's wicked."

"No, it isn't," he reiterated positively. "Not if he tells me I lie."

He watched her narrowly. Some cunning instinct forbade him to reveal the name of the man whom he had knocked down.

"Yes," she continued more emphatically. "Some men might knock him down,—but not you. It would make people afraid of you, and then you would surely have to be shut up, and all that I could say wouldn't help you any."

Her manner was very serious. He looked at her with painful intentness.

"I don't want to be shut up," he went on, "because I want to go to the minister's."

The girl laughed. "Well, why don't you go then?" she asked.

"I want to go to the minister's and marry you, Mary," he said simply. He lifted his head,—that poor, bewildered head,—with again something of the dignity of a man.

"I want to go now, Mary," he continued, rising and straightening his tall figure, while she, too, stood, astounded, before him. "And you must go with me, right down to the minister's, and be married,—and then no other man can marry you,—and then they won't dare to take me away and shut me up."

"Oh," laughed the frightened girl tremulously, and trying in vain to conceal her agitation at this strange proposal, "you must wait till the folks come home. There! I think I hear them coming now!"

She ran to the window and looked out, but though she offered up an anguished prayer for their return, no one appeared down the long, dark road. The sky was growing blacker constantly. Great drops were already falling, and distant thunder was rattling hoarsely.

"You had better hurry home, Lonnie," she pleaded. "Hurry! You will be wet to the bone if you don't hurry."

"No," he said decisively. "I am going to the minister's with you to get married,—and then Idalye can marry Lem Harris. I want her to marry him,—and I will marry you. Put your things on as quick as you can. We can get there now before it rains much."

"No, we can't," she replied with spirit. "It is raining now. Don't you see it is?—And I couldn't think of going without my father. The father always has to give the bride away."

Her convincing tone made the poor fellow pause a moment. Then the sweat broke out in great beads on his forehead and he cried furiously: "No, he doesn't! You are making fun of me! You are like the Barry children, who run out and make faces at me!—and call me 'Fool Lonnie!'—Yes, you are, too!—And you must come, Mary,—right away!—Why, Mary!"—his tone changed to one of infinite tenderness,—"I can carry

you, Mary,—see how strong I am! Get your hat, Mary,—get your hat, quick!"

The girl stood irresolute, and almost ready to faint with terror.

"Why, I should have to wear my waterproof," she argued, gaining her voice by a violent effort, and still affecting to speak lightly. "It would never do to be married in a waterproof! You will have to wait until the rain is over. It will be over pretty soon."

"No, no!" he cried wildly. "I can't wait,—for they may come to take me away and shut me up. Come now,—quick!" He drew himself up again, and his face assumed a look of almost savage earnestness. He ground his teeth together. "Mary," he said sternly, "you *must* come."

"Well," assented the panic-stricken girl, all her resources failing her, "just let me get my things."

She ran wildly into an adjoining room, and swiftly bolted the door behind her. The idiot followed at her heels, and stood as if petrified when he heard the sound of the sliding bolt. Then, with one blow of his mighty hand, he burst the frail thing open, and stood beside her, white and trembling.

"What made you lock that door, Mary?" he asked angrily. "You shouldn't do it. It wasn't right. Now get your things on, quick!"

The poor girl with quivering fingers adjusted her hat and her waterproof cloak, pinned up her dress and pulled on her rubbers. Then, taking an umbrella, she started to accompany him on his crazy mission.

"It is perfectly ridiculous, Lonnie," she faltered, laughing feebly, "for us to start off in this storm. There,—hear that!" as an awful peal of thunder jarred the house, followed by a driving gust of rain.

"I will take care of you, Mary," he said firmly. "You needn't be afraid of anything. And we will go by the shortest way. We will go by the wood-road,—and I will carry you,—see!"

He caught her up in his strong arms, as though she had been a spray of blossoms, and ran with her out into the storm.

By a moment more they were in the midst of the woods, and she knew that there was no longer any hope that her parents might see and rescue her.

"I wish that you would let me walk, Lonnie," she begged faintly.

"No,—I like to carry you. You ain't heavy, Mary, and I am the strongest man you ever saw!"

He struggled on with her through the storm, while she closed her eyes and resigned herself to the situation. She was beginning now to reason. She did not believe that the idiot, mad as he was, would harm her, and she felt sure that, when they once reached the parsonage, their excellent pastor would in some way divert Lonnie from his purpose. He was rushing on with incredible strength and speed, breathless and silent amid the turmoil of the elements.

Suddenly a wilder gust than ever struck them, and the idiot reeled and almost fell with his burden. He was obliged to put her down for a moment in order to recover himself. A bright thought occurred to her. She was very swift-footed. Perhaps she could distance him.

"Come, Lonnie!" she cried playfully, "catch me!"

Like a sprite, she darted ahead of him, before he could even make a motion to detain her. She knew every inch of the wood-path. In utter darkness she could still have found her way there unerringly. Now, incessant flashes of lightning made every rock and bush plain. Mortally fearing that she would escape him after all, the idiot sprang in pursuit of her. "Stop, Mary!" he bellowed. "Stop, stop!"

Winged to almost supernatural fleetness by her terror, still she sped on ahead of him. Suddenly there was a pause in the lightning. Taking advantage of the momentary gloom, Mary swerved from the path and crouched behind a convenient boulder. Her ruse was successful. When the next flash came, the idiot appeared, far in advance of her. The thunder which instantly followed was deafening. It rattled horribly, long after the first wild crash was over. The girl instinctively put her hands to her ears and uttered a shriek

of alarm, but her weak voice was drowned in the detonation of the thunder. Another appalling flash of lightning came almost immediately. In her panic she forgot to be cautious. She stood upright and gazed down the long vista of the forest-path. At first, she saw nothing, but when the light came again, she could discern the figure of Lonnie, lying prone upon the ground, only a little in advance of the spot where she had last beheld him. Perhaps he had been seized with some sort of a fit. Perhaps he had been struck by the lightning. Perhaps he had succumbed, in spite of his boasting, to an unreasoning fright at the fury of the storm, —but there he lay, and if she was ever to escape, now was her time.

As fast as her feet could carry her, she returned to her parents' house. Finding that they had not yet returned, she ran onward, drenched and exhausted though she was, to the Widow Temple's, which was the next house. There, her lover met her at the door. His head was bandaged, but otherwise he was himself again. He poured forth an alarmed appeal for an explanation of her distraught condition; but she could make no response, for, as soon as her foot crossed the threshold, she fell in a dead faint, from which she did not rally for hours. When she began to regain consciousness, she cried distractedly over and over, "Don't let him get me! Oh, don't let him get me!"

But pretty Mary Doane did not need to worry,—and Idalia's peach-bloom cheeks would never again blush for shame because of her idiot brother. "Fool Lonnie" still lay stretched out upon the forest-path, where the lightning had last revealed him; and down his broad white back was a dark line of death which it had drawn there.

Madame Juliette Adam has made of this simple incident of her childhood, a fascinating story. It has been rendered into English especially for ROMANCE by Helen E. Meyer.

MY FIRST BOARDING-SCHOOL.

I.

THE effort made by a mature mind to recall again its earliest impressions, is a very curious thing. One evokes them; they rise up under the form of a very small person, whom one succeeds in detaching from one's self, but who, nevertheless, continues to make one body with what one has become. The impression is singular, it is multiform. The image of the vision of the "myself" is clear, well-defined. As soon as one says to one's self, "When I was a child," one can see one's self as one was at certain hours; but as soon as one wishes to remember an event or question a fact, one cannot escape from one's actual personality, and it is impossible to rid that fact or that event of its connections, of all its future consequences. One would like to describe childhood with childish words; one cannot do it.

Is it interesting for another mind than one's own to rehearse what one did at the age of three years? I fear not; yet, nevertheless, I will try. Since I run this risk, I desire to run it absolutely and to describe in the most natural way possible what appears to me from out the past.

One day—it was not a Sunday—my grandmother put on me a pretty white dress which she had embroidered herself, and she said to me: "This is your birthday; you are three years old on this 4th day of October."

"Three years!" These two words repeated themselves in my head; they had in them something grave and gay at the same time. To grow is the perpetual dream of childhood, which entertains some surprising

illusions upon this subject. They said unceasingly around me, "She is tall for her age." I looked at myself. I thought of the children who were smaller than I, and I found myself tall; a pride came over me, which was increased by a word uttered by my nurse Arthemise; for the first time she called me, "Mademoiselle."

On that day all the persons who saw me kissed me. I returned the kisses of my grandfather and of my grandmother, suspending myself by my arms on their necks; but I remember that many people displeased me by kissing me too hard. I made an exception for my nurse Arthemise, whom I adored, and for my big friend Charles, who had promised to marry me, and who called me his little wife. I thought, not without pride, that now, when I was three years old, he would call me "his big wife," a thing which he did with much respect on offering me a drum.

My grandfather and my grandmother expected for breakfast my father and my mother, who lived three leagues from Chauny, at Blérancourt. Every time they came, they were late, because the route across the prairie of Manicamp was so bad; so bad that people told the children the following story: A cow had fallen in one of the ruts, and the herder, who was always searching for her with his whip-handle, could never find her again.

I was hungry, and at each moment I ran to the front-door; I held on to the doorpost and leaned outside. I was a little afraid; the front stairs seemed to me so high with their four steps; but then I thought I would be very useful to the kitchen if I could cry out at the first glimpse of them: "There they are!" I was extremely restless. I even fell once, to the great fright of Arthemise, who feared for my pretty dress. Finally my parents arrived.

They told a great story which I do not now remember. The carriage and the horses were covered with mud. My papa and my mamma said that the road was bad, a thing which impressed me. My mother wore a silk dress, very much looped up, and very much hidden under her shawls. I can yet see her unfold her jupe

and shake it; I help her by beating the silk, and I repeat with admiration, "Mamma is pretty!"

My father takes me up, and puts my head upon his shoulder; he has tears in his eyes. My mother takes me in her turn, and she cries also.

"It is a long time since we have seen you," says my father, "a very long time."

"Oh yes, a long time!" repeats my mother.

I am looking for that long time, and I do not find it; my grandmother answers:

"Oh no, not a long time, two months."

And I am more contented.

We are sitting down to breakfast. My grandfather tells some things at which everybody laughs, but I am thinking already that the gayety will not last, that my mother will begin again to cry in a moment, and that the days when my parents from Blérancourt are present are always sad on account of me. I well know why. I have a story and I tell it when I am asked for it:

"My grandmother took me from my mother when I was nine months old. She stole me; then I made thirty leagues in the stage-coach; it was when I was very little,—and that is all." All Chauny has made me tell that story. All Chauny likes to question me because I began to speak very early and without the Picardy accent. They think from Brouage to Pissot that I am a little Parisian, and this title of Parisian which they give me runs through my head unceasingly; it appears to me synonymous with *Queen*. My father suddenly says:

"This time we shall take Juliette home with us."

"I shall keep her," answers my grandmother.

"It is over two years that you have kept her from us; I want her," adds my mother. "If Juliette had a brother or a sister, I would give her to you, I assure you."

"Why has she neither a brother nor a sister?" asked my grandfather with a smile. "Is it our fault?"

I, too, ask myself why I have not a little brother or a little sister. I tell myself that my grandmother is right, and that my parents from Blérancourt are wrong.

"You must give Juliette back to us," says my father again.

"No, never!" answers my grandfather.

Then begins a scene which has been renewed during my whole childhood, in which they cry out sharply, in which they pull me first to one side, then to the other; in which they kiss me with faces all wet; in which they grow angry and scold; in which they make me idiotic by asking me:

"Will you come with us?" "Will you remain with us?"

I answer crying, having no idea of my cruelty toward my father and mother: "I want my grandmother! I want Arthemise and my grandfather!"

On that day, as very often afterward, my parents yield —they become appeased; my grandmother, by force of tenderness, obtains from them the concession that they will leave me at Chauny. My father repeats to me a hundred times:

"Do you love your papa and your mamma?"

"Yes, yes, yes."

My grandmother adds:

"We must begin her education, which can only be done at Chauny. She shall go to the boarding-school to-morrow."

My mother puts on her hat, my father wraps her in her shawls, they enter the carriage, and I send them some kisses on the tips of my fingers.

II.

The next morning I am awakened early. I am still very sleepy. That which, when very little, according to the expression of my grandfather, I called "the family drama," has fatigued me.

As it is my habit, in the large *salon* with four windows, which my first recollections paint to me as immense and which since then has grown a good deal smaller, I am seated near the fire between my grandfather and my grandmother, going from the knees of the one to the knees of the other. Arthemise is standing up and my dresses are spread out upon a chair.

They dress me after having washed me—a thing which I do not like much, although it is a small matter,—a little on the face and the hands, and even then my grandfather says to my nurse:

"Leave her alone, you will make pimples come to her face."

Instead of my pretty white dress of the evening before, they have put on me a dark one. My white apron is covered all over by a black apron. I find that I am not pretty, and I feel sad. My grandfather says:

"Poor good little woman!"

I burst into sobs. I know well enough what a boarding-school is. I have some large friends who go there. I might be proud of it, but I am not; I am afraid.

I repeat through my tears: "Grandmother, I will be good; I do not want to go to boarding-school. Keep me here."

My grandfather says that they might let the winter pass before sending me to boarding-school.

Arthemise declares that I am yet too little—that it is a *murder!*

That word murder is sounding to this day in my ears, like the explosion of a bomb.

"A murder! a murder!" exclaims my grandmother, with her face all red. "You are crazy."

Here is again "a family drama." My grandfather calls Arthemise an "*insolente.*" After having become angry, they do not get over it as easily as my parents.

"This evening you shall pack your trunk," says my grandmother to my nurse, "and to-morrow you shall return to Caumanchon. Leave the room!"

"You might have scolded her, but not sent her away," says my grandfather; "this girl loves the little one sincerely. Besides, after all, she is right; it is a murder. Let Juliette play a year or two more."

"I want her to surpass all the others," answers my grandmother; "besides—be still."

"Ta, ta, ta!" repeats my grandfather, who always gives up with these three words.

My grandmother takes me by the hand, and there I am, on the way to boarding-school.

My friend the grocer, to whom I bring all my pennies to get sugar-balls, yellow, red, white ones, greets us, and my grandmother tells him that she is taking me to boarding-school.

"You want to make a *savante* of her," answers the grocer.

The butcher's wife is at her desk, in the wide-open shop. She asks where I am going thus with my black apron,—if it is for a punishment? As my grandmother answers: "To boarding-school!" the butcher's wife adds: "It is the same thing; poor little dear!"

The large door of Madame Dufey's boarding-school closes with a sound like the rolling of a storm. I enter into the yard, where there are some "little ones and some tall ones." Madame Dufey appears before me. She has mustaches, and the sight of her terrifies me.

"I have had the mother, I shall have the daughter," she says.

My grandmother wants to leave me. I hang on to her skirts. I drag myself by them along the ground. I choke—I repeat sobbing: "You do not love your little girl any more."

For the first time my grandmother remains insensible to my grief. She repulses me. She, who so far has consistently spoiled me, thinks that the moment has come to be severe.

"Be obedient," she says to me, "or you shall never come back to the house again."

"I shall keep her for dinner, to get her used to it," says Madame Dufey to my grandmother. "Do not send for her until this evening."

No misfortune in my life has appeared to me greater than this abandonment; no anxiety has more broken me. I am leaning on the wall of the class-room, under the bell which they are ringing. This infernal noise, from which I have not the strength to run away, breaks my head.

Pushed on by my new comrades, I enter a dark, sad room; they oblige me to seat myself alone at the end of a bench. I have a fit of despair; I cry with all my strength, I call Arthemise—my grandfather!

An assistant-teacher tells me to keep still; she shakes me; I am not still, I defend myself; they carry me to a garret and leave me there, I do not know how long. Even to this day it seems to me that that day lasted several months. It occupies as much space among my souvenirs as whole years of other times. The assistant-teacher comes back at dinner-time. I have not stopped crying; if I had known what it was to die, I should have wished for death.

"Will you keep still?" says the assistant-teacher to me. "Will you be good?"

I execrate this wicked woman, the first enemy that I have ever met. I threaten her. She places a piece of dry bread at my side and leaves me, saying:

"*You will give up.*"

Madame Dufey has forgotten me. My grandmother knows it later. I have never had a more violent anger than my anger against the door which is closed. I have never found those who are called "*the others*" more cruel than on that day. After a perfect tornado of weeping, knocking, crying, I fell on the floor exhausted, and I slept.

I awoke in the arms of Arthemise, who was in tears, frightened to see me pale, and with my face all shrivelled. She rocked me to lull me to sleep while she told me some gay stories of Caumanchon; she repeated: "They do not love you, they do not love you!"

Now, as I had Arthemise again, I did not cry any more. I felt a strong will in me. I said to my nurse:

"Arthemise, you love me, don't you?"

"My dear little one, of course I love you," answered she.

"Well, Juliette wants to go to Caumanchon. You will obey her."

She resisted.

"They will say that I have stolen you; no, no;—but I shall not fail to tell her all the harm she has done you —your grandmother—be sure of it."

"Juliette wants to go right away," said I. Arthemise gave up to my prayers.

And as we went out of the boarding-school, I hurried

up the stairs of the rampart and began to run as fast as I could.

Arthemise caught me, took me in her arms, and pressing me against her, she ran without stopping in the direction of her village.

III.

When she was too tired to carry me any longer, Arthemise put me down and I ran on, holding her by the hand. It seemed to me that I was doing a great thing and that I was in the right, while my grandmother was wrong. While running or in the arms of Arthemise, I repeated the word which had struck me so much:

"It is a murder!"

"Yes, it is a murder," said Arthemise, "but we shall see what we shall see."

We walked on in the mud; it was dark, and if I had not been with Arthemise, I should have been very much frightened at the ruts where the cows were lost. I was hungry, very hungry, and I thought I was a very unhappy little girl.

We arrived at the house of my nurse. The door stood open. A great clear fire burned in the large chimney. The father and the mother of Arthemise appeared to me to be older than my grandfather and my grandmother. They were eating soup and rose up in alarm when they saw me.

"Why do you bring Mam'selle here?" exclaimed they.

"Because they want to do her harm!"

"Who?" said the father.

"The master and the mistress."

"You are crazy! It is none of your business, it is none of your business," repeated the mother.

"I am hungry; will you give me some soup?" asked I.

The good people helped me, both of them at the same time. That soup appeared to me better than all the soups of my grandmother.

When I was warmed, Arthemise put me to bed, undressing me only partially. She left a candle upon a

shelf. The sheets were very coarse. There were some spider-webs on the walls and hanging to the ceiling, and in the room itself some wooden boxes, between the slats of which came out the little heads of rabbits.

My own head was on fire. It seemed to me that the rabbits looked at me to ask me my story.

I dropped on my knees upon the coarse sheets, and I said:

"My good rabbits, I have a grandmother who does not love me."

I do not know what the rabbits answered me. At that moment I was taken up in the arms of my grandfather, who devoured me with his kisses and who carried me before the fire. Assisted by Arthemise, he tried to dress me with his trembling hands.

"You wicked little girl! Your grandmother is crazy with anxiety," repeated he.

"I do not like her any more," cried I, throwing myself upon Arthemise's neck. "I want to stay at Caumanchon, in the rabbits' room. I do not want to leave my Arthemise."

I had a fever, and my grandfather, who was a surgeon, was afraid that I might have convulsions. Besides, he could not take me away alone, since he had to drive the horse.

"We shall take Arthemise with us. She shall not leave you," said he to me.

"I shall not go to boarding-school, grandfather? Never?"

"No, calm yourself."

We left; I was seated upon the lap of Arthemise, and I saw the full moon for the first time.

I remember my astonishment, and the confused ideas which I kept for a long time about this pale sun.

When I arrived at the house, my grandmother was upon the steps, so undone—she had cried so much—that I saw well she had been terribly worried. She asked my pardon. "My darling, they shut you up in the garret! It was horrible; you did well to punish me. I shall not torment my little girl any more," said she.

I felt a certain superiority, which gave me some relief.

I congratulated myself upon my conduct. Perhaps that moment decided my character.

"Juliette will always do like that when grandmother is wicked," said I, "and then she wants Arthemise forever."

My grandmother covered me with kisses.

"Arthemise," said she, "tell me all she said, all she did. It was she, was it not, who wanted to run away?"

"Yes, madame."

"She resembles me, the love, I adore her! Arthemise, promise me that you will yourself make her like the boarding-school. We must stock this little head with furniture. It is well worth it."

"No, no, no furniture in my head," cried I.

Arthemise and my grandmother had understood each other. I returned to the boarding-school later, but with a friend who taught me to amuse myself with images and the letters of the alphabet.

The United Empire Loyalists were American Tories who forsook their homes and property after the Revolution, to live under the British flag. Reprehensible though Americans may consider the political opinions of those men to have been, it is impossible to withhold admiration from their devotion to their ruling idea. This story is obviously intended, not only to picture a heroic deed, but to indicate in some degree the quality of the U. E. Loyalist type. John Bedell was a loyalist, but none the less brave American. His thrilling story is told by E. W. Thomson.

JOHN BEDELL, U. E. LOYALIST.

"A RENEGADE! A rebel against his king! A black-hearted traitor! You dare to tell me that George Winthrop loves you! Son of canting, lying Ezra Winthrop! By the Eternal, I'll shoot him on sight if he comes this side!"

While old John Bedell was speaking, he tore and flung away a letter, reached for his long rifle on its pins above the chimney-place, dashed its butt angrily to the floor, and poured powder into his palm.

"For Heaven's mercy, father! You would not! You could not! The war is over. It would be murder!" cried Ruth Bedell, sobbing.

"Wouldn't I?" He poured the powder in. "Yes, by gracious, quicker'n I'd kill a rattlesnake!" He placed the round bullet on the little square of greased rag at the muzzle of his rifle. "A rank traitor—bone and blood of those who drove out loyal men!"—he crowded the tight lead home, dashed the ramrod into place, looked to the flint. "Rest there, old Sure-death—wake up, for George Winthrop!" and the fierce old man replaced rifle and powder-horn on their pegs.

Bedell's hatred for the foes who had beaten down King George's cause, and imposed the alternative of confiscation or the oath of allegiance on the vanquished, was considered ferocious, even by his brother Loyalists of the Niagara frontier.

"The Squire kind o' sees his boys' blood when the

sky's red," said they in explanation. But their inference erred. Bedell was so much an enthusiast that he could almost rejoice because his three stark sons had gained the prize of death in battle. He was too brave to hate the fighting-men he had so often confronted. But he abhorred the politicians, especially the intimate civic enemies on whom he had poured scorn before the armed struggle began. More than any he hated Ezra Winthrop, the lawyer, arch-revolutionist of their native town, who had never used a weapon but his tongue. And now his Ruth, the beloved and only child left to his exiled age, had confessed her love for Ezra Winthrop's son! They had been boy and girl, pretty maiden and bright stripling, together, without the squire suspecting—he could not, even now, conceive clearly so wild a thing as their affection! The confession burned in his heart like veritable fire—a raging anguish of mingled loathing and love. He stood now gazing at Ruth, dumbly—his hands clenched, head sometimes mechanically quivering, anger, hate, love, grief, tumultuous in his soul.

Ruth glanced up—her father seemed about to speak—she bowed again, shuddering as though the coming words might kill. Still there was silence—a long silence. Bedell stood motionless, poised, breathing hard—the silence oppressed the girl—each moment her terror increased—expectant attention became suffering that demanded his voice—and still was silence—save for the dull roar of Niagara that more and more pervaded the air. The torture of waiting for the words—a curse against her, she feared—overwore Ruth's endurance. She looked up again suddenly, and John Bedell saw in hers the beloved eyes of his dead wife, shrinking with intolerable fear. He groaned heavily, flung up his hands despairingly, and strode out toward the river.

How craftily smooth the green Niagara sweeps toward the plunge beneath that perpetual white cloud above the Falls! From Bedell's clearing below Navy Island, he could see the swaying and rolling of the mist, ever rushing up to expand and overhang. The terrible

stream had a profound fascination for him; with its racing eddies eating at the shore; its long weeds, visible through the clear water, trailing close down to the bottom; its inexorable, eternal, onward pouring. Because it was so mighty and so threatening, his stern soul rejoiced grimly in the awful river. To float, watching cracks and ledges of its flat bottom-rock drift quickly upward; to bend to his oars only when white crests of the rapids yelled for his life; to win escape by sheer strength from points so low down that he sometimes doubted but the greedy forces had been tempted too long; to stake his life, watching tree-tops for a sign that he could yet save it, was the dreadful pastime by which Bedell sometimes quelled passionate promptings to revenge his exile. "The Falls is bound to get the Squire, some day," said the banished settlers. But the Squire's skiff was clean built as a pickerel, and his old arms iron-strong. Now when he had gone forth from the beloved child, who seemed to him so traitorous to his love and all loyalty, he went instinctively to spend his passion upon the river.

Ruth Bedell, gazing at the loaded rifle, shuddered. Her filial love seemed to have died with those threats. Her fears were deep, but she had not told all. George Winthrop himself, having made his way secretly through the forest from Lake Ontario, had given her his own letter asking leave from the Squire to visit his newly made cabin. From the moment of arrival her lover had implored her to fly with him. But filial love was strong in Ruth to give hope that her father would yield to the yet stronger affection freshened in her heart. Believing their union might be permitted, she had pledged herself to escape with her lover if it were forbidden. Now he waited by the hickory wood for a signal to conceal himself or come forward.

When Ruth saw her father far down the river, she stepped to the flagstaff he had raised before building the cabin—his first duty being to hoist the Union Jack! It was the largest flag he could procure; he could see it flying defiantly all day long; at night he could hear its glorious folds whipping in the wind; the old Loyalist

loved to fancy his foemen cursing at it from the other side, nearly three miles away. Ruth hauled the flag down a little, then ran it up to the mast-head again.

At that, a tall young fellow came springing into the clearing, jumping exultantly over brush-heaps and tree-trunks, his queue waggling, his eyes bright, glad under his three-cornered hat. Joying that her father had yielded, he ran forward till he saw Ruth's tears.

"What, sweetheart!—crying? It was the signal to come on," cried he.

"Yes; to see you sooner, George. Father is out yonder. But no, he will never, never consent."

"Then you will come with me, love," he said, taking her hands.

"No, no, I dare not," sobbed Ruth. "Father would overtake us. He swears to shoot you on sight! Go, George! Escape while you can! Oh, if he should find you here!"

"But, darling love, we need not fear. We can escape easily. I know the forest path. But—" then he thought how weak her pace, "We might cross here before he could come up!" cried Winthrop, looking toward where the Squire's boat was now a distant blotch.

"No, no," wailed Ruth, yet yielding to his embrace. "This is the last time I shall see you forever. Go, love,—forever and forever good-by, my love, my love."

But he clasped her in his strong arms, kissing, imploring, cheering her—and how should true love choose hopeless renunciation?

Tempting, defying, regaining his lost ground, drifting down again, trying hard to tire out and subdue his heart-pangs, Bedell dallied with death more closely than ever. Often he could see the wide smooth curve where the green volume first lapses vastly on a lazy slope, to shoulder up below a huge calm billow, before pitching into the madness of waves whose confusion of tossing and tortured crests hurries to the abyss. The afternoon grew toward evening before he pulled steadily home, crawling away from the roarers against the

cruel green, watching the ominous cloud with some such grim humor as if under observation by an overpowering, but baffled enemy.

Approaching his landing, a shout drew Bedell's glance ashore to a group of men excitedly gesticulating. They seemed motioning him to watch the American shore. Turning, he saw a boat in midstream, where no craft then on the river, except his own skiff, could be safe, unless manned by several good rowers. Only two oars were flashing. Bedell could make out two figures indistinctly. It was clear they were doomed—though still a full mile above the point whence he had come, they were much farther out than he when near the rapids. Yet one life might be saved! Instantly Bedell's bow turned outward, and cheers flung to him from ashore.

At that moment he looked to his own landing-place, and saw that his larger boat was gone. Turning again, he angrily recognized it, but kept right on—he must try to rescue even a thief. He wondered Ruth had not prevented the theft, but had no suspicion of the truth. Always he had refused to let her go out upon the river —mortally fearing it for *her*.

Thrusting his skiff mightily forward—often it glanced, half-whirled by up-whelming and spreading spaces of water—the old Loyalist's heart was quit of his pangs, and sore only with certainty he must abandon one human soul to death. By the time that he could reach the larger boat his would be too near the rapids for escape with three!

When George saw Bedell in pursuit, he bent to his ash blades more strongly, and Ruth, trembling to remember her father's threats, urged her lover to speed. They feared the pursuer only, quite unconscious that they were in the remorseless grasp of the river. Ruth had so often seen her father far lower down than they had yet drifted, that she did not realize the truth, and George, just arrived from a distant district, was unaware of the long cataracts above the Falls. He was also deceived by the stream's treacherous smoothness and, instead of half-upward, pulled straight across as if

certainly able to land anywhere he might touch the American shore.

Bedell looked over his shoulder often. When he distinguished a woman, he put on more force, but slackened soon—the pull home would tax his endurance, he reflected. In some sort it was a relief to know that one *was* a woman; he had been anticipating trouble with two men equally bent on being saved. That the man would abandon himself bravely, he, being brave, scarcely doubted. For a while he thought of pulling with the woman to the American shore, more easily to be gained from the point where the rescue must occur. But he rejected the plan, confident he could win back, for he had sworn never to set foot on that soil. Had it been possible to save both, he would have been forced, despite his vow, but the Squire knew that was impossible—three would overload his boat beyond escape.

Having carefully studied landmarks for his position, Bedell turned to look again at the doomed boat. At that glance a well-known ribbon caught his attention! The old man dropped his oars, confused with horror. "My God, my God, it's Ruth!" he cried, and the whole truth came with another look, for he had not forgotten George Winthrop.

"Your father stops, Ruth. Perhaps he is in pain," suggested George to the quaking girl. She looked back.

"What can it be?" she cried, filial love returning overmasteringly.

"Perhaps he is only tired," George affected carelessness—his first thought being to secure his bride—and pulled hard away to get all advantage from Bedell's stop.

"Tired! He is in danger of the falls, then!" screamed Ruth. "Stop! Turn! Back to him!"

Winthrop instantly prepared to obey. "Yes, darling," he said, "we must not think of ourselves. We must go back to save him!" Yet his was a sore groan at turning; what Duty ordered was so hard—he must give up his love for the sake of his enemy!

But while Winthrop was still pulling round, the old

Loyalist resumed rowing, with a more rapid stroke that soon brought him alongside.

In those moments of waiting all Bedell's life, his personal hatreds, his loves, his sorrows, had been reviewed before his soul. He had seen again his sons, the slain in battle, in the pride of their young might; and the gentle eyes of Ruth had pleaded with him beneath his dead wife's brow. How poor seemed hate—how mean and poor seemed all but Love and Loyalty! Yes, for he had looked through the veil into the eternal, too, and stood, a trivial creature, before the Almighty, knowing his meaning. Wherefore resolution and deep peace had come upon the man.

They wondered at his look. No wrath was there. The old eyes were calm and loving, a gentle smile flickered about his lips. Only that he was very pale, Ruth would have been wholly glad for the happy change.

"Forgive me, father," she cried, as he laid hand on their boat.

"I do, my child," he answered. "Come now without an instant delay to me."

"Oh, father, if you would let us be happy!" cried Ruth, heart-torn by two loves.

"Dear, you shall be happy. I was wrong, child, I did not understand how you loved him. But come! You hesitate! Winthrop, my son, you are in some danger. Into this boat instantly! Both of you! Take the oars, George. Kiss me, dear, my Ruth, once more. Good-by, my little girl. Winthrop, be good to her. And may God bless you both forever!"

As the old soldier spoke, he stepped into the larger boat, instantly releasing the skiff. His imperative gentleness had secured his object without loss of time, and the boats were apart with Winthrop's readiness to pull.

"Now row! Row for her life to yonder shore! Bow well up! Away, or the falls will have her."

"But you!" cried Winthrop, bending for his stroke. Yet he did not comprehend Bedell's meaning. Till the last the old man had spoken without excitement.

Dread of the river was not on George—his bliss was supreme in his thought, and he took the Squire's order for one of exaggerated alarm.

"Row, I say, with all your strength," cried Bedell, with a flash of anger that sent the young fellow away instantly. "Row! Concern yourself not for me. I am going Home. Row! for her life, Winthrop! God will deliver you yet. Good-by, children. Remember always my blessing is freely given you."

"God bless and keep you forever, father!" cried Ruth, from the distance, as her lover pulled away.

They landed, conscious of having passed a swift current, indeed; but quite unthinking of the price paid for their safety.

Looking back on the darkling river, they saw nothing of the old man.

"Poor father!" sighed Ruth, "how kind he was! I'm sore-hearted for thinking of him at home, so lonely."

Left alone, Bedell stretched with the long, heavy oars for his own shore, making appearance of strong exertion. But when he no longer feared that they might turn back with sudden understanding, and vainly, to his aid, he dragged the boat slowly, watching her swift drift down—down toward the towering mist. Then as he gazed at the cloud, rising in two distinct volumes, came a thought spurring the Loyalist spirit in an instant. Thereafter he pulled steadily, powerfully, noting landmarks anxiously, studying currents, considering always their trend to or from his own shore. Half-an-hour had gone when he again dropped into slower motion. Then he could see Goat Island's upper end between him and the mist of the American Fall.

Now the old man gave himself up to intense curiosity, looking over down into the water with fascinated inquiry. He had never been so far down the river. Darting beside their shadows, deep in the clear flood, were now larger fishes than he had ever taken, and all moved up as if hurrying to escape. How fast the long trailing, swaying, single weeds and the crevices in flat rock whence they so strangely grew, went up stream and away as if drawn backward. The sameness of the

bottom to that higher up interested him—where then *did* the current begin to sweep clean? He should certainly know that soon, he thought, without a touch of fear, having utterly accepted death when he determined it were base to carry his weary old life a little longer and let Ruth's young love die. Now the Falls' heavy monotone was overborne by terrible sounds—a mingled clashing, shrieking, groaning, and rumbling, as of great boulders churned in their bed.

Bedell was nearing the first long swoop downward at the rapids' head when those watching him despairingly from the high bank below the Chippewa River's mouth saw him put his boat stern with the current and cease rowing entirely, facing fairly the up-rushing mist to which he was being hurried. Then they observed him stooping, as if writing, for a time. And then he knelt with head bowed down. Kneeling, they prayed, too.

Now he was almost on the brink of the cascades. Then he arose, and, glancing backward to his home, caught sight of his friends on the high shore. Calmly he waved a farewell. What then? Thrice round he flung his hat with a gesture they knew full well. Some had seen that exulting waving in front of ranks of battle. As clearly as though the roar of waters had not drowned his ringing voice, they knew that old John Bedell, at the poise of death, cheered thrice, "Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah for the King!"

Floating with the heaving water in the gorge below the falls, they found his body a week afterward. Though beaten almost out of recognition, portions of clothing still adhered to it, and in a waistcoat-pocket they found the old Loyalist's metal snuff-box with this inscription scratched by knife-point on the cover, "God be praised! I die in British waters. John Bedell."

The example of Chapoteau teaches several valuable lessons, none of which is too heavily didactic. His story was told by Camille Lemonnier, and made into English for ROMANCE by E. J. Fagundus.

CHAPOTEAU, ASSASSIN.

POLYDORE CHAPOTEAU, grocer, had retired from business. He had taken a house in the country, where he raised chickens and lived happily. He was considered among the fortunate few who realized their dreams here below.

Chapoteau was a good fellow, and was fond of entertaining his neighbors. Champignol was his best friend. They had played some famous games of billiards together, and had become intimate, though not without a little rivalry in caroms. Champignol lived at the other end of the village, and every Thursday he came to take pot-luck with Chapoteau.

Well, one Thursday when the melons were ripe, Champignol arrived as usual.

"Madame Chapoteau and the servant have gone to the city and will not return till the last train. We are alone and must prepare our feast ourselves."

Champignol put on the servant's apron, Chapoteau his wife's apron, and while one prepared the vegetables, the other one roasted the meat.

It was a fine feast. A melon just ripe, cultivated by Chapoteau with paternal tenderness, appeared at dessert. Champignol adored melons; he left only the rind and the seeds.

"I have eaten too much," he said after the coffee.

He became melancholy. Chapoteau got up and, without saying a word, opened a drawer where his pharmacy was arranged, and, taking one of the phials, poured from it into Champignol's mouth about a teaspoonful of medicine.

"You do not find me unprepared," he said. "Do you not feel better?"

Champignol rubbed his hand over his stomach and nodded affirmatively. Suddenly his chin dropped and he appeared to be asleep.

"Refreshing sleep!" murmured Chapoteau, happy at the effect of his drug, and while waiting for Champignol to awaken, he commenced to wash the dishes.

Half-an-hour later he returned to the room on his tiptoes; Champignol had not awakened.

"I will look after my chickens," said Chapoteau to himself.

Half-an-hour passed thus. Champignol still slept on.

"He is taking a long nap," thought Chapoteau. "I will arrange the lettuce."

That occupied a full hour. Now Champignol would surely be awake! But Champignol still slept.

"Ah! the idea!" growled Chapoteau, and he commenced to slap his friend on the back, gently at first, then harder and finally with his fists. Champignol did not move.

Then a cold shiver ran over Chapoteau. Had an accident happened to him? Could he have burst a blood-vessel? Melons are traitorous.

He opened Champignol's hands and slapped them, opened his mouth and breathed into it. Finally, not knowing what to do, he began to tickle him under his arms and laughed loudly to excite him. In truth, poor Chapoteau had no desire at all to laugh!

Champignol remained as lifeless as a work of art.

"Perhaps it would be better to leave him alone. He will awaken himself."

Chapoteau walked about his garden, a prey to a vague agitation. Suddenly the idea came into his mind that his friend was playing him a trick.

He knelt before him.

"Now, Champignol, no more foolishness. You have deceived me long enough."

Champignol did not move.

"Champignol, dear old Champignol, my dear Champignol, Guonal, my little Pignol!"

Chapoteau employed all the tones of tenderness, surprise and terror. "Little Pignol" was said in a heart-

broken way, with a trembling voice; a stone would have been touched, but Champignol remained insensible.

"Ah! that's it, is it!" said Chapoteau, and becoming fierce, he gave his sleeping friend a blow in the face.

"There! Now we shall see!"

Champignol oscillated, swayed, and fell forward with his head upon the table.

"Ah! You want to frighten me! That won't do! There! and there!" He was becoming exasperated. The honest and gentle Chapoteau had been transformed into an inquisitor.

Suddenly his arm fell. If this should be real! If it were not a joke of Champignol's!

He seized his hat and rushed out like the wind. Where should he go? For the doctor, parbleu! Why had he not thought of that sooner? He was only a few steps from the doctor's house, when a terrible thought stopped him short.

He had given laudanum to Champignol, to be sure, but he thought he had given him only a fair dose. Perhaps he had made a mistake; perhaps he had poisoned Champignol; they would have an autopsy of the body; they would discover the poison; he would be arrested, judged, condemned, and dragged to the scaffold!

To the scaffold!

The ideas clashed together in his head; he felt as if a mill-wheel were revolving in his brain. He retraced his steps. Perhaps, who knows? Champignol may have awakened at last!

Vain hope! Champignol had turned green. His hands were as cold as marble; his heart had ceased beating.

Their little pleasuring was turning into a tragedy. Chapoteau buried his head in his hands, sad, distracted, seeing nothing but that inert mass, those rigid members and closed eyes; and through the doors he seemed to hear the noise of the court-room.

He was alone, without witnesses. No one could prove his innocence. Everything was against him. It would be impossible also to prove an alibi. People had seen Champignol come in, and it was known that he

came every Thursday. They had seen him also walking in his garden. Chapoteau believed himself lost. Only one resource was left him. He took Champignol in his arms, lifted him from his chair and pulling him by his shoulders, his head and his legs, dragged him to the end of the garden. It was growing dark. Suddenly a board fell near to Chapoteau; he started, cried out, ready to struggle, thinking the officers had come to arrest him; the silhouette of a cat, prowling on the wall in the clear twilight, eased his mind a little.

Near the hedge there was a large round hole. Chapoteau rolled the body of his friend into it. His feet projected beyond, so he covered them with straw.

"Adieu, Champignol," he sobbed. There, at least, his victim was in a secure place; they would not discover him there very soon. Chapoteau would have time to escape.

He reached the fields, walking straight ahead, without plans. He had only one thought—to get away, to go to the end of the world; but his feet refused to carry him. Every few minutes he was obliged to sit down by the road-side. He had knotted a handkerchief about his head, so as not to be recognized. Already he was devising the ruses of the criminal.

Three hours had sufficed to lose his assured position, to make an assassin of him, to lower him to the ranks of the greatest rascals. What did his conscience matter to him? He would not be the less culpable in the eyes of the world; and his crime would appear all the more horrible because his victim had been his best friend. And yet he had been an honest man during fifty-five years; he had practised all the virtues; he had dreamed of dying in his bed. Poor Chapoteau! Most unfortunate Madame Chapoteau!

He saw himself on the bench of the accused; the judge was talking to him; they had spread out before him the victim's clothes; and in the darkness the crowd howled, stamped and threatened to kill him.

Then a greater fear spurred him on, and he began again to walk. Sometimes he stopped, believing he could hear some one running after him. The trees took on

strange forms in the darkness. The wind whispered: "Poisoner!" He stopped for a long time on the bank of a pond trying to persuade himself to jump in.

A noise of footsteps caused him to look up suddenly. Two policemen were coming toward him; in the dusk they seemed enormous, like the pillars of the guillotine.

"It is all over," moaned poor Chapoteau, "they have followed me. They will arrest me."

He hid himself behind a hedge. The policemen passed on.

Chapoteau wandered for an hour or two; he could no longer see nor hear; his head swayed on his shoulders, as an empty gourd sways in the wind.

"By this time," he thought, "I should be in my bed at home."

And distracted by his fears, he stumbled against a wall; there were houses in front of him, black as his crime, as his thoughts, as his remorse. However, a light gleamed beneath a door. Tired out, his strength and energy exhausted, he knocked. He heard voices inside. Finally they opened the door.

Chapoteau gave a loud cry.

"Champignol!"

It was Champignol in person; he had awakened in the hole and was still laughing at the joke.

Chapoteau a joker indeed! Chapoteau thought himself dreaming.

Then he had not given a fatal dose of laudanum—though a little too much, it is true.

He had not killed Champignol. He had not committed a crime! He would not die on the scaffold! He touched Champignol with the tips of his fingers, as one touches a delicate piece of game, fearing that this shape was only Champignol's shadow.

In reality, Chapoteau never forgave Champignol for the fright which he gave him that day.

This exciting story of adventure is by Lieutenant-Colonel Mahoney, C.M.G., and first appeared in the *Argosy*.

THE CAPTAIN'S CHARGE.

Extract from District Orders,
PIETERMARITZBURG, May 10, 1879.

"CAPTAIN ELLICOTT, 94th Regiment, will report himself without delay to Major Manley, Chief Paymaster, in order to receive instructions that will be conveyed to him by that officer."

In obedience to the foregoing, I presented myself at the head office of the Army Pay Department, and requested to be shown to Major Manley's room.

"Good-morning, sir," I said on being admitted. "I am directed to report myself to you."

"Yes, Ellicott," answered the ever-cheery chief, who had always kindly words of advice and encouragement to offer those who served under his orders. "I am about to detail you to a difficult and somewhat dangerous duty. Money must be conveyed to Newcastle for the payment of supplies, as the Boers refuse to receive our paper; and even if the drafts were accepted, there is not sufficient specie in the small country banks to meet all the demands that would be made upon them. So I want to send you up with fifty thousand pounds in gold to be handed over to Mr. Martin, now in commissariat charge at Newcastle, who will account to me direct for all payments made."

"Am I not to have the usual escort detailed in the Treasury instructions?" I asked.

"No; there's the pinch. Our losses were so great at Isandhlwana that we have not a single man to spare. All clerks and employed men must take their turn of duty. Besides, I wish to avoid an escort, as it would only have the effect of unnecessarily advertising the matter. In the present state of the country, with shoals of doubtful characters about, this would be injudicious

and almost invite attack. So the General has fallen in with my suggestion as to the manner of conveyance, I taking the responsibility of its safe delivery. Now listen." And he proceeded to unfold his plan.

The position appeared to be this: After our losses on the 22d of January, and while waiting for reinforcements, there were barely enough men to enable us to hold our own in case of a descent upon the Colony by Cetewayo. Pietermaritzburg had been put in a state of defence by erecting loopholed barricades in the streets. The court-house was fortified and laagers formed at various strategic points, to which all the inhabitants were to repair upon a given signal—the firing of three guns in quick succession from Fort Napier. All the outlying posts and towns were also strongly fortified. This prohibited the withdrawal of any men employed in the duties of defence.

Ordinarily a guard of one officer and twenty-five men is provided for the escort of treasure; but, as has been explained, the present circumstances were unfavorable to this course, and prompt payment for supplies being imperative, the following was decided on.

The money was to be packed in empty ammunition boxes, with the usual descriptive label of contents remaining on them. Then it was to be loaded in an ordinary Cape cart (a marvel of lightness and strength) and placed under charge of an officer, who, he was pleased to say, should be a man of courage and resource; passing it on to the front, as was frequently done at the time, as ammunition. There was a great scarcity of stores of all kinds after our losses at Isandhlwana, where immense quantities of supplies had to be abandoned.

"Now," he went on to say, "the greatest risk you will run is from the swarm of men who, under the guise of somebody's 'Horse,' or somebody else's 'Rangers,' *et hoc genus omne*, are spread all over the country at the present time. I don't allude to the gallant men under tried leaders who have done such good and loyal service, but to those smaller bands under unknown men, to which are attracted the usual lawless spirits that

always crop up under pressure of times like the present. Should you come across any of these, they would make nothing of taking your life if they got an inkling of what you have in charge."

This was true enough.

"Now, Captain Ellicott, do you feel equal to the risk?" continued Major Manley. My spirits rose at the prospect. The task was no doubt a difficult one, but I reflected that this was a chance that might never come in my way again, and I felt a not unpardonable pride in the hope of obtaining a little distinction should I successfully carry out the duty now entrusted to me.

"I am your man, Major," I replied. "When am I to start?"

"Good," he said, grasping my hand. "Your ready acceptance of what, to be plain with you, is a hazardous undertaking, shall not go unrepresented in the proper quarter."

In order to throw the loafer element off the scent, a paragraph was inserted in "The Natal Witness," stating that Captain Ellicott of the 94th Regiment was in orders to join the headquarters of his corps, and take with him a supply of reserve ammunition, the Transport Department being directed to provide conveyance.

The date of leaving was given as some days after that intended for my actual departure; consequently I should be well on the way before it was known that I had started.

Two days after the interview mentioned above, the cart containing my valuable consignment wound slowly upward along ten miles of steep hill leading to Howick. The Hottentot driver grumbled now and then at the weight of the ammunition, saying it ought to be sent on an ox-wagon, instead of a mule-cart. He was afraid the springs would not hold out. I soothed him, however, with an occasional draught of Boer brandy, with which I had provided myself—that fiery liquid so highly prized by his class, upon whose head it appeared not to make the slightest impression. After a long and wearisome crawl upward, we reached at length the comparatively level road which terminated at the hotel.

I was disagreeably surprised on arrival to find here a body of volunteers, about forty in number; composed principally, as it appeared to me, of that dubious class known as the "canteen loafer," a product peculiar to some parts of South Africa. They were under the leadership of a smooth-tongued individual named Osierton, whom I had frequently met at Pietermaritzburg, and who was said to be very well connected—a reckless gambler, ready to bet on anything or everything, having the additional reputation of being an utterly unscrupulous scoundrel.

His second in command was a drunken, quarrelsome ruffian named Mondrum, who had been forbidden the entrée to any decent hotel where he was known, and was strongly suspected of being concerned in a robbery committed at a farm-house on the Mooi River some months previously. His knowledge of the Zulu language (he having lived among the natives for several years) was the recommendation for the post he held.

On my requesting Mrs. Padley, the landlady, to oblige me with a separate room in which to deposit the ammunition, she became alarmed and refused to allow it to enter the house.

"No, sir," she said. "I have had trouble enough already with these men. They have been hanging about the place for nearly a week, and I am afraid if I admit your ammunition, they will set fire to something and blow us all to pieces. It had better remain outside."

This was an unexpected rebuff, and all I could urge would not make her alter her decision. So with many misgivings I piled the boxes in front of a little turret room at the end of the veranda that had been allotted to me as a sleeping-place.

This band of volunteers, or what many persons would be inclined to style bandits, kept up their revels to a late hour, and then dropped off, one by one, to seek some place inside or outside the house to sleep away the effects of their orgie.

I tried to ascertain from Osierton where he was bound to, and when he intended to march, being desirous of

giving him and his men a wide berth. He smiled furtively, and replied in his smooth, almost musical voice: "Really, Captain, I am not quite sure yet. I was detailed by General Clifford to proceed to Harrismith; but I understand that that has now been changed, and I am waiting here for orders. Where might you be going?"

I thought it well to conceal my destination, and said:

"Oh! I'm for the Bushman's River, at Weston."

"The Bushman's River? Why the mounted police are there! They have plenty of ammunition, I know. Major Dartnell, their commandant, told me so."

"Yes, of course," I replied. "But this that I have is intended for distribution to any detached post that may be in need of it; and Weston is centrally situated."

This conversation took place in the verandah outside my room, in the vicinity of the boxes. Mondrum, coming out of the hotel at the moment with a pipe in his mouth, reeled up to where he heard voices.

"What's up?" he demanded. "Who says we're to move on? Devilish unlikely, with comfortable quarters and five bob a day for doing nothing. Time enough to do the fighting when it comes."

"I vote for staying here and holding the laager." A laager adjacent to, and partly joining the hotel, had just been completed by the neighboring farmers, as a place of retreat should an attack be made. "What do you say, Commandant?" he inquired, addressing Osierton, and seating himself on the boxes.

"Don't smoke over the ammunition," I said. "One doesn't know how a spark might reach it."

"Let it go off, then," he answered with an ugly word, kicking at the pile and dislodging one of the boxes, which fell to the ground.

"Hullo!" he cried, "it jingles like coin. Let us lift it up again."

This random shot made me hold my breath for a moment. Then I hurriedly stepped forward and replaced it.

"It wouldn't be a bad idea," said Osierton, "to store

this in the laager, and there we would have it snug, in case of a visit from Dabulamanzi. I hear he was seen at Veldtman's Drift yesterday."

"I couldn't allow it to leave my charge," I returned, "until it is handed over to the officer commanding at Weston. Otherwise I should get into trouble."

"Oh, we'll relieve you of all that," he cried. "This is war time, and circumstances alter cases."

The position was getting a little embarrassing, so it struck me I had better fall in with his humor, and pretend to think it might be as well to do as he suggested; merely observing that they would not find it of much use, as the cartridges were for Martini-Henrys, and their arms seemed to be Sniders.

"Oh, let it go! What's the good of keeping it here?" said Mondrum. "It will only be in the way. We have plenty for our own fellows. Have you anything to drink?" he inquired, turning to me.

"Yes. I have a couple of bottles of whiskey in the cart, and shall be glad if you will join me in a glass." This offer was met with a noisy approval; and seating ourselves on the step of the hotel we proceeded to discuss the liquor. After a while I pretended to fall asleep, and they, when both bottles had been finished, were soon snoring beside me.

I rose cautiously on ascertaining that all around were deep in slumber, and went toward my room, very anxious as regarded the action I should take.

I may here mention that the money was made up at the bank in rouleaus of twenty sovereigns each, and packed tightly in the boxes. But after the last had been filled, there remained over and above about eighty sovereigns; too few to fill another box, and too bulky to fit in, made up in the same manner as the others. So they were distributed loosely over the top of the last box, and some sheets of paper pressed heavily down upon them to prevent any rolling about. To this circumstance my thoughts reverted when Mondrum spoke of the "jingle of coin"; for undoubtedly the same impression had been conveyed to my own mind when the box fell. It would be singularly unfortunate if this

should be the identical box in which the loose money had been placed.

I also began to have doubts of the crafty Commandant. I had noticed him eyeing me once or twice, and I might, unknown to myself, have shown more anxiety than the occasion seemed to warrant.

I was in much perplexity as to what course I should pursue. I could do nothing openly against the desperadoes that surrounded me; and if any idea dawned upon them of the real nature of my charge, nothing could save me. But I was determined not to resign it without a struggle.

Several plans occurred to my mind. I thought of quietly harnessing the mules and driving back to Pietermaritzburg, taking my chance of pursuit, and waiting a more favorable opportunity. But this idea, on reflection, I abandoned, as it would be impossible to get away unobserved, and my returning without any obvious reasons would give rise to comment.

I never closed my eyes during the night, and just as the gray light of dawn began to appear, I got up and looked around. Osierton and Mondrum were still lying where I had left them, and a number of others were scattered about the stoop.

At this moment I heard a quiet step pass the end of the house near the laager, and was a little startled to see the dark face of an Italian named Marco Dinelli, who had been employed as a temporary clerk in the office of the Chief Paymaster. From that post he had been quietly dismissed on account of a doubtful transaction in reference to a money order sent to a soldier who was a patient in hospital; which order was cashed by Dinelli, after the man's death.

The deceased soldier's signature was suspected of being a forgery. The Italian averred, however, that he had advanced the amount of the order to the man.

The ex-clerk knew a good deal about the pay office, and the object of my journey might by some means have leaked out; so I was not without apprehension on this score.

He advanced and saluted me respectfully.

"Well, Dinelli," I said, "what are you doing here?"

"I am on my way to the front, sir," he replied. "Captain Shepstone told me some time ago, if ever I wanted employment, he would appoint me to his own troop of Natal Carbineers; and being anxious to see a little service, I thought I would remind him of his offer."

"How did you get here?" I asked.

"I came up by the post-cart on Thursday," he replied, "and was hoping some kind person would give me a lift. You don't happen to have any room, sir?"

"No," I said; "my mules have as much as they can carry already."

He glanced, I thought, curiously at the boxes, and saluting again, wished me good-morning, and went toward the front of the hotel.

By this time the people of the house began to stir, and preparations for breakfast were soon in full swing.

On the appearance of this meal, I joined the motley group in the common room, for there is no distinction in a frontier hotel in South Africa; master and mistress and guests of every degree sitting down together.

I observed Dinelli and Osierton in conversation during the morning, and this did not tend to allay my fears. So I delayed proceeding onward for the present, and continued my stay at Howick, until I had time to think the matter out.

Toward mid-day I observed a mule-cart bowling along the road from the direction of Pietermaritzburg. On reaching the hotel it pulled up close to where I was standing, and there stepped out an officer in uniform, whom I recognized as Dr. Mills, of the Army Medical Department.

We had met frequently at headquarters, and knowing him to be a man of some judgment and decision of character, I determined to make a confidant of him.

Having unharnessed and partaken of refreshments, he expressed a wish to see the Umgani Falls; a magnificent cascade in the immediate neighborhood, falling from a height of over three hundred feet. The roar of its waters could be heard from where we were standing.

I hailed this opportunity of making my communication, and volunteered to accompany him.

When well out of earshot, I explained all the circumstances of my position and the doubts I entertained of Dinelli. He listened attentively.

"And now what do you suggest?" he asked, after I had ended.

My idea was this: He being on his way to Helpmakaar with a supply of medical comforts for the troops was to permit me to exchange loads with him, allowing me to transfer the contents of his vehicle to mine while I placed the specie in his. He then was to drive on by Currie's Post and Colenso to Ladysmith, where the money could be placed in charge of the resident magistrate until my arrival.

"But how about yourself?" he asked. "If, as you seem to think, they have a suspicion of what you carry, you will be murdered to a certainty. I never saw a more cut-throat looking set of scoundrels in my life than those worthies of Osierton's Horse. Besides, how can the exchange be effected without exciting suspicion?"

"I have thought of that," I returned. "After breakfast I had a private interview with Mrs. Padley, and upon my pressing representation obtained her consent to have the boxes removed to a room at the back of the premises. A door from thence led into the new laager, as a place of exit, should the hotel be attacked and become untenable. From that room I think I should be able after nightfall to make the necessary transfer unobserved, you causing your conveyance to be taken to the back of the house. I heard them say that Mr. Shore, of the Telegraph Department, was expected in to-night with some workmen, and as he is a jovial sort of fellow, always spending his money pretty freely, there will, no doubt, be a carouse. As regards myself," I added, "they will feel secure, for I have announced my intention of not starting until late to-morrow morning, two of my mules being slightly lame. This luckily happens to be the case. Should this come off all right, I will take my departure, after allowing you a good

start, and, if I reach Currie's Post unmolested, will remain there for the night; and on the following morning endeavor to reach Ladysmith by Bavian's Port and the old road."

"I think the plan a risky one for you, whichever way you look at it," he observed; "but you may rely on my co-operation."

I thanked him heartily, and remarked that his own share was not free from danger; at which he laughed.

After viewing the falls we returned to the hotel.

The advent of Mr. Shore led, as was anticipated, to a jollification, and I joined in it with apparent zest, slipping away every now and then to remove a packet from the doctor's cart, replacing it by one of the boxes, until the exchange had been fully completed.

The next morning was an anxious one to me.

Dr. Mills, at an early hour, harnessed in a leisurely manner, stood chatting with me for a few minutes on indifferent subjects within hearing of the people about, and then drove away.

I gave a sigh of relief as I saw the mules turn round the corner that shut out the view of the house, and disappear in the scrub-lined road below.

Turning back to the hotel, I encountered the Italian, in company with Osierton and Mondrum. "Well, Captain," said the latter, "when do you start? Can we help you to load the ammunition?"

"Thank you," I said coolly; "it is done already. I didn't like to trust to chance, as accidents often happen."

"Yes; it might go off, you know," said Osierton jeeringly; and they all three laughed.

I was now convinced that Dinelli had by some means become acquainted with the fact of the dispatch of the gold; so I determined to delay my departure as long as possible, in order to enable Dr. Mills to reach Currie's Post in sufficient time to halt, rest his mules, and again resume his journey; by which time the safety of the consignment would be secure.

I answered the trio with a jest, and my spirits rose at the thought of having outwitted the scoundrels.

I noticed that they did not communicate with any other members of the band, so concluded that, if they had any enterprise in hand, they meant to keep it to themselves.

When the time arrived that I had decided to start, I ordered the driver to harness, having previously hired two fresh mules from a farmer in the neighborhood. When all was ready, I drove away.

A number of the men were standing about, but I did not observe Dinelli or his two new friends.

Carefully examining my revolver, which was loaded in all six chambers, I brought it conveniently to my hand and prepared for whatever might happen.

There was only one part of the road where I could be attacked at a disadvantage, and this was situated about half-way between the Falls and Currie's Post, at a bend around a narrow shoulder of rock. Before coming in sight of this place I pulled up a few moments, and addressing the driver, said:

"Now, my man, I want you, on reaching Botha's Neck, to drive your hardest round the bend, and tear at full speed down the hill into the open. I fear I am going to be attacked, but nothing must stop you. There is a sovereign, and if we reach Currie's Post, I will give you another. But should you hesitate for a moment—see this"—and I pointed to my revolver.

"Hi!" he yelled, as he caught the coin I threw to him. Then flourishing his huge whip and calling the animals by their names, he urged them on in the usual Hottentot fashion.

I had determined to push boldly on, concluding that Dr. Mills would by this time have reached his destination; for my life would certainly pay the forfeit should they discover the ruse I had practised.

On reaching the point I had indicated, the driver rose in his seat and brought his whip down with a crack like a pistol-shot, taking the critical turn at a break-neck pace. But as we rounded the curve there arose three figures from behind one of the larger rocks, with rifles pointed and shouting to us to stop.

"Drive on!" I cried. "Drive on!"

Seeing that we disregarded their menacing demand, they delivered a volley, one shot striking the driver and tumbling him into the road, the wheels passing over him.

I gathered up the reins as best I could, shouting and encouraging the mules to keep up the pace, and with such success that I was enabled to reach the incline that led to the open country.

Having by this time re-loaded, they sent in a second volley, one shot striking me in the cheek, while another disabled two of the leading mules. This brought me to a standstill, and the three men rushed forward. I fired at the foremost, bringing him down, and the other two, swearing fearful oaths, made toward me. I recognized them as Osierton and Mondrum. The man I had hit was Dinelli.

I slipped out on the off-side, where I was partially covered by the cart.

"Stand back," I said, "or I'll fire. What do you want?"

"Hand over the money," replied Osierton, with an oath.

"What money?" I asked. "There is no money here."

"Don't parley with us," said the other ruffian, "or I'll put a bullet through you in no time."

"I tell you there is no money here," I repeated; "nothing but medical stores. Look for yourselves."

"Stand out of the way, then," said Osierton.

I stood aside, revolver in hand, while the blood streamed down my face and neck. They both dived into the cart.

At this instant I cast my eyes down the road, and saw a small party of mounted men riding toward us. I sprang to the crest of the hill, and waved my hat frantically to them. The next moment I heard a report and felt a burning sensation at the side of my head; then dropping to the ground, lost all consciousness.

When I recovered, I found myself in bed at Currie's Post, suffering from a gun-shot wound that had nearly made an end of me; missing by almost a hair's breadth,

but giving me a nasty knock on the head and carrying away a portion of my left ear.

The horsemen I had seen were Commissary-General Lanfree and three officers of his department on their way from the front. They at once observed my signal, rode rapidly up the hill, where they found me insensible, the driver severely wounded in the neck and two ribs broken by the wheels having passed over him.

Dinelli was dead. The other two rode off, and escaped to the Orange Free State, taking part against us subsequently in the Transvaal War; but after that nothing further was ever learned regarding them.

The money was conveyed safely by Dr. Mills to Ladysmith and deposited with the Resident Magistrate, from whose custody it was afterward transferred to its proper destination: the worthy doctor receiving back his supply of medical appliances.

I was complimented by the general for what he was pleased to term the courage and resolution I had displayed; and on the report reaching home I was promoted, and received a decoration in recognition of the service I had rendered.

At this season of the year, when our seminaries and colleges are turning out sweet girl-graduates by the hundred, this charming love-story is especially appropriate. When will men understand that a woman's learning has little to do with her charm? A pretty and affectionate woman will be pretty and affectionate still, though she may comprehend the calculus and Sanskrit; the woman-heart cannot be crushed by erudition. Long live the girl B. A.'s! The story of this particular one was written by Gilbert Doré, and made into English for ROMANCE by V. M.

A BACCALAUREATE.

I.

"No, mother, no! It is absolutely useless! We may as well drop the subject."

My mother held her hands toward the fire,—plump little hands covered with rings, the last coquetry of her sixty years.

"Jack," she replied sternly, "you are as headstrong as your father used to be. When he was of your age he would not listen to a word about marriage. Poor man! he much preferred his famous Bachelors' Club, and swore to remain faithful to its laws. But mark my words, before you know it, you too will be walking up to the altar, my friend. '*Oú le père a passé passera bien l'enfant!*' (The son follows in the footsteps of his father) —so Alfred de Musset tells us."

"Oh, that's all very well," I cry, "but in my father's youth the girls were not full of notions like these of to-day; they were modestly educated young girls, the extent of their ambition being to read a sonata, write a correct note, and make a fairly graceful courtesy. But now——"

"Well, Jack, you are not complimentary, to say the least," interrupted my mother. "It is your opinion then that the girls of my day were little more than simpletons?"

"I beg your pardon, mother dear! But even you must admit that formerly the education of young girls

was much less pretentious, and I think more consistent, than that of our little blue-stockings; for when they left boarding-school, they had only enough instruction to enable them to understand the pages of a romance, or follow a conversation,—not enough to humiliate their mothers, and not infrequently their husbands as well. From their infancy they were prepared to fill the rôles of wives and mothers, and the happy husband could sleep contentedly every night in the assurance that the 'angel of the fireside' would superintend the desserts and darn his socks conscientiously."

Mamma started impatiently from her chair.

"Jack, it seems strange that a woman of the old school should be obliged to combat your prejudices. But I assure you, my dear, that in my time the majority of those 'angels of the fireside,' whose praises you sing so loudly, were very shallow girls. What girl of spirit would be contented with the secondary rôle that you men would like to impose upon her? No, no! it is not the learning of your wife which frightens you young men; it is your own ignorance. Oh, it is nothing more nor less than self-conceit! If you had not been afflicted with laziness while in college, you would fear comparisons less!"

"Oh! oh! mother, you're too bad!"

"You maintain then that Latin, Greek,—a college education, in short—is incompatible with modesty, grace, sweetness, and the domestic qualities of a woman?"

"I do maintain it most emphatically."

"Very well. Go to Madame Desjardins' with me this evening. There shall be no more talk of marriage. It is simply an unceremonious call. You will see the twins, and can judge for yourself, my son, since you have so slight a regard for my experience. You understand that you are free to do exactly as you like. In fact, you need come to me for no information or advice on the subject. Go and dress, my son."

II.

Marry a baccalaureate! Heavens! when I heard my mother's wish I felt a shiver run down my back. Look

here, mamma, you may as well be honest and say outright that you are planning my death, and by what a means! Why not throw me overboard and done with it?

The absurdity of proposing a B. A. to me! To me! a man thirty years of age—a man of sense, I can honestly say—who would only enter the road to Hymen with the caution of a Sioux Indian! Alas! cruel mother, what have I done to you? Have I not for love of you heard *La Dame Blanche* eighty times?

From the bottom of my heart I cursed Vichy and its waters, Vichy with its shady walks, Vichy and its promenade concerts, where mothers in quest of sons-in-law meet mothers in quest of daughters-in-law. Was it not there under the shades of the park that Mme. Desjardin and my mother met after years of separation? Was it not there that they formed the first conspiracy against the security of my bachelorhood?

III.

Here we are at Mme. Desjardins'!

"My dear friend, let me present my son."

"Little Jack!"

I am annoyed by this exclamation. I feel that my appearance in the drawing-room is made ridiculous. This good lady in green satin knew me as a boy, in the golden days of black marks and whippings. It is very delightful, I am sure, and I ought to be charmed; but thirty unknown faces stare curiously at this "little Jack," with a respectable mustache, whom Mme. Desjardins finds "much changed." Great Scott! I should hope so, in fifteen years! Confound her reminiscences of childhood! She might as well talk of my first kilts or inquire if I have brought my hoop.

Fortunately Mme. Desjardins adds a few words of gracious welcome which restore my breath, and mother turns to introduce me to the young ladies.

The Misses Desjardins are twins, a blonde and a brunette. They are of the same stature, and dress alike even to ribbons; but here the resemblance ceases.

Miss Martha, the brunette, is a beautiful, yes, a very

beautiful woman—too beautiful for simple mortals. A Greek goddess! a Pallas Athene! Her features are pure and cold; her rich black hair forms a royal diadem about her head. Rose is less of a woman, less imposing. A real Greuze, this young girl!—bewitchingly pretty, with her little Parisian nose, her dimpled cheeks, and fair hair which looks as if powdered with gold. What a smile! What a voice,—so sweet, so sweet! A veritable child, whom one might still suspect of playing with her dolls when no one is by, in spite of her nineteen years,—and a child who surely is no Bachelor of Arts!

Mamma had never mentioned the name of the learned Miss Desjardins, but who could dream of insulting this exquisite Miss Rose by even a suspicion?

The other is the baccalaureate. I am sure of it. Could she have appeared, draped like a statue in the salons of the First Empire, she would have struck wonder to all hearts! Her rich voice, a vibrating contralto, must show to advantage in scanning hexameters. I can appreciate her taste. Great Scott! Greek must be becoming to this classic beauty. What a thrill of admiration would run through an audience as she murmured in the original The Plaints of Iphigenia!

A little informal dancing is proposed. I offer my arm to the little Greuze. So much the worse for the Grecian goddess, the Pallas Athene. Between two waltzes I have an opportunity to talk with my charming little partner, who glides about like a fairy in a cloud of blue gauze; a fan of pigeon-feathers beats against her delicate breast, like the wing of a dove.

In a quarter-of-an-hour I feel that I am quite competent to judge of Miss Rose. She is bright, but I take care to keep the conversation on simple topics. She would find it difficult to display much learning! She is a good little girl, very acute, rather roguish, but simple, frank and unassuming. She loves music, can sketch cleverly, and last year, while visiting her aunt in the country, she had a delightful time making preserves. Dear little Greuze! What delicious preserves yours must be! and what an adorable little housewife you must make, in a large white apron, your sleeves rolled

up to show the dimples in your elbows! Look! you can see them now, just above your gloves. What a sweet picture! Surely I have found the dream of my life,—a dear, rosy, ingenuous little wife, who makes preserves!—"Jack, dearie, taste my jelly." How these words go to a man's heart! What baccalaureate would ever condescend to call me "dearie"? *She* would never make me preserves.

Thus I rush into it. I divulge my theories upon the education and destiny of woman. Wife and mother,—the Angel of the Fireside, no more, no less. Slyly I send a few arrows flying against the pedestal of the Grecian goddess, the Pallas Athene, and I praise, with rare tact, I flatter myself, the art of housekeeping, which I am sure Miss Rose understands to perfection. But I immediately repent. She blushes with modesty, poor child! Perhaps, too, she is a little hurt to see her sister's *bagage classique* so little appreciated.

Quick, I must repair my blunder. I will ask Pallas Athene for a quadrille.

IV.

"Well, Jack," said mamma, when comfortably installed in the coupé which was carrying us far from Miss Rose, "do you regret having thrown away your evening, my son?"

"'Thrown away' is rather severe, mamma! Had Mme. Desjardins and her daughters been much less charming, I should not have regretted accompanying you when you wanted me to do so. But my opinions are unchanged, I confess; baccalaureates have no charm for me."

"As you like, my son. You are perfectly welcome to your own opinion."

What was the meaning of the smile, half-satisfied, half-roguish, which flitted across mamma's face, under the shadow of her white lace scarf?

V.

O Rose! Rose! Every night my dreams are haunted by your dress of azure blue. Why, O Rose, are your

eyes the color of your gown? Why do tiny curls escape from the coil of your fair hair to nestle tremblingly in your neck, like a pale smoke, a golden mist? Why do gay dimples spring in your velvety cheeks when you smile? Above all, why, O Rose of May, sweet Rose without thorns, has heaven placed you beside a gorgeous but perfumeless tulip, glowing like a flame in the pride of her beauty? Rose, you have made me faithless to the classic beauty. For me your sister Martha possesses only the cold majesty of a statue; a religious awe steals over me when gazing on your pure face. Rose, I am only happy near you!

Thus my thoughts wandered for eight long days. Was it my thoughts alone? What was there to prevent the straying of my heart as well?

VI.

I have seen her again! I see her now every week. I have a standing invitation to Mme. Desjardins' Wednesday evenings, and she, with her daughters, comes regularly to mother's Friday receptions.

My mind is filled with a collection of portraits representing Miss Rose in various guises. Miss Rose in her fairy-like ball-dress; Miss Rose in an exquisitely fitting calling-suit of delicate gray; Miss Rose in a white house-dress, adorned with a dainty Russian apron. But in these various aspects she is always the same little Rose, whose sweet graces have gone to my very heart.

One morning I rushed into my mother's room.

"Mamma, I love Miss Rose. I must marry her. Put on your calling-dress as quickly as you can. Take a carriage, fly to Mme. Desjardins', and tell her that, if she refuses to let me marry her daughter, I shall be wild with despair,—that I shall drown myself—that——"

"Well, well, Jack, not so fast, I beg," replied mamma quietly. "It is not customary to make an offer of marriage at nine o'clock in the morning. Besides, my dear," she added as she placed her coffee-cup upon the dressing-table, "you must remember our compact. You are not to ask advice, information or assistance

from me. Marry whom you like. Arrange matters as best you can. It is your own affair."

Decidedly, mamma is still vexed with me! Very well, I will do without her advice and assistance. This evening, yes, this very evening, I will lay my heart, my name, my fortune and my life, at the feet of my dear Rose.

The day passed in an agony of hope and fear. And to think that I, practical man that I am, kissed at least a hundred times a flower stolen from my idol! And I gazed at that flower like a school-girl dreaming over a faded marguerite as she thinks of the vows of her cousin.

VII.

There is a concert and ball at Mme. Desjardins'.

In the bay window—she wears the blue tulle dress—I have heaven in my soul!—Oh, how beautiful the May nights are, when one can throw wide open the windows of the ball-room! When happy couples, a black coat and a light dress, stray out upon the balcony to gaze up at the stars! When the air is filled with the intoxicating odor of the dewy foliage!

Does Rose encourage me to confidences! She seems vaguely melancholy, and the smile has fled from her lips. Our talk is serious, and is interrupted by those long pauses when the heart seems full to bursting. Strange! It seems as if a new being were gradually being evolved from the young girl I have known. Rose seems like a woman to me now, yes, like a woman who still retains the sweet naïveté of a child.

The glimpses I catch of this unknown person throw an irresistible charm over my already stricken heart. What an infinitude of perspectives is unveiled to my view;—child, woman, trust me! Do not hide from me longer the mysterious treasures of tenderness half-hidden by thy sweet purity! We are alone. The stars watch over us. I cannot help but adore thee!

I bend toward her. Suddenly, behind us, there is a movement of chairs, and a rustling of dresses. Whispers interrupt me.

"The Mariani is going to sing," murmur the voices.

Oh, what is the famous cantatrice to me! I am vexed at the interruption. But soon the light chords of the prelude reach us, like the awakening of birds in the fields at break of day; then a voice is heard above the rustling of fans, a magnificent voice which calms me, moves me, penetrates to my very soul, and I feel a great wave of harmony pass over me.

She sings:

"Maiden, harken to my prayer!
Listen to me, I implore!
My heart will surely break.
And all for thy dear sake!
Maiden, I love thee
As I have never, never loved before!"

Heavens! I lose my head,—I seize the trembling hand resting upon the window-sill. Rose starts. Sing on, blessed voice! sing on, and whisper to my beloved all that fills my heart! And yet I dare not speak.

"Fain would I serve thee,
My lady-love, my queen,
Lo! where before thee prostrate I'm kneeling,
Ah, trust me, and I will faithful prove,
Be but my own; my wife! my love!"

A round of applause follows. I bend toward my darling, who smiles, but seems ready to cry.

"Rose, Rose, do you understand? Rose, will you trust me, that I may prove my faithfulness to thee? Will you be 'my own; my wife; my love?'"

She sighs, she trembles! No, I am not mistaken!—She loves me! she loves me! I read it in her eyes!

"Rose, I love you. I adore you for your simplicity, for your sweet naïveté, for your adorable ignorance of the life and ways of this world. In you I find my ideal of what a woman should be. One who has lived a quiet, secluded life in the bosom of her family, happy in the sweet home life that is the scorn of pedants and blue-stockings. You are the companion of my dreams. O Rose, my Rose,—say that you can love me!"

She grows pale, then red, and the tears fill her eyes; then she becomes paler still, and replies very softly, but firmly and sadly:

"No, Mr. Jack, I am not your ideal woman. You have so often described her to me, so often and so cruelly, perhaps, that I might almost ask myself at this moment if you are mocking me. But I feel that for the time being, at least, you are sincere. You love me, you say, because I am simple and gay, as girls of my age should be; because I do not scorn home life, and because I make a fairly good hostess. But you wouldn't love me any more, I'm afraid,—you would find me ridiculous, you would leave me in disappointment, if you knew——"

"Knew what, Rose, for Heaven's sake?"

"I am surprised that you do not know what all our friends know, your mother as well as any one,—I have, —I am,—I am a Bachelor of Arts! And you have sworn never to marry a Bachelor of Arts. You told me so yourself."

Then she burst into tears.

"You a baccalaureate, Rose! Is it—possible? I thought it was your sister!"

"No, it is not my sister. Unfortunately it is I!" she sobbed.

Dear Rose, my dearly beloved, why can't I throw myself on my knees before you here in the bay-window, and make honorable amends for my stupidity. Ah, fool that I have been, and how blind! Here I have caused this angel of simplicity to blush for her learning! I have wounded and humiliated her! But how could I have dreamed that Fate had reserved such a rare treasure for me? Such a mind, united with sweet womanly grace and a true heart.

"Rose, speak to me in Latin; speak to me in Greek; but tell me that you love me, even if it is in the language of Homer! O Rose! I will study my forgotten declensions to please you, and we will discuss philosophy together by our fireside! Have I obtained my pardon! Will you believe me, my dearest?"

She places her trembling little hand in mine, while

the Mariani repeats once more with her divine voice, the impassioned love-song:

> "Maiden, I love thee
> As I have never, never loved before!"

VIII.

Rose is my wife now. We discuss all sorts of subjects as we admire our baby, who dances gayly on the knees of his future preceptress.

As for me, I am the happiest of men; my wife is so bewitching when, to tease me, she says in Latin, what we are always thinking, "I love thee!"

If you come to see us in the country, you shall taste the preserves of my fair baccalaureate, and you must give me your opinion of them, you gentlemen who swear so strongly never to marry a Bachelor of Arts.

The very words "Seville" and "Guadalquivir," are redolent of romance. This tale of that legend-laden quarter of Spain fitly forms the first in our group of Three Romantic Stories. Although truly Spanish in its tone and scenery, it is from the pen of that foremost of modern Italian novelists, Edmondo de Amicis. The English is supplied for ROMANCE by Eva Marie Tebbets.

MANUEL MENENDEZ.

I.

THE little Andalusian song entitled *Don Manuel Menendez* is a tale which has almost nothing in common with the actual facts. These can be gathered only from Sevillians intimately acquainted with the hero himself. Of these there are few; because at fourteen, after losing his father and mother, he left Seville; he did not return there until ten years after, and left forever at the end of a few months. In this brief time, he filled the city with his name. He did not, however, remain always in town; he would leave, return, vanish without any one knowing why or whither; and sometimes the notice of his return came as unexpectedly to his friends as that of his sword-thrust given or parried outside the Porta di Cordova in a question of women or politics. Many said that he had a streak of madness, the result of a blow he had received on his head, at thirteen, from the horns of a young bull (*Novillo*) in the Sunday sports of the ring. In truth he had received it, and still bore its traces; but his brain had come out intact. He had a marvellous exuberance of life, which expanded in love, in action, in tears, in blood, without attaining peace; a big heart, a satanic pride, bursts of fury, wherein once he had shattered his hand on the wall, a force of soul to make one tremble, and the courage of a madman. His speech did not come forth, it exploded, and it always seemed that a part of his life ran out in the sound of his voice.

When some affrighted *torrero* hurled a traitor-thrust, or lacerated the animal without killing him, the most formidable "Coward!" that resounded in the Ring of

Seville was his: in the theatre of San Fernando, when suddenly was heard, in the silence of some sublime scene, one of those *bravos* speeding from the heart's depths, setting a chill running through the pit, nobody asked whence it was; everybody knew it was from Manuel Menendez. A certain friend of his said that he had a *talento colosal;* but it was a pure Andalusian fib. His lyrics were but one long period, a sweep of sonorous words and glittering images, terminating in an unexpected line, calculated to make a grand stroke; and the whole poem was constructed on this generally little understood line. His poetry was as little comprehended as his life. One had seen him at midnight crossing the *Halameda de Hercules* without his hat; another had seen him issuing at dawn from a side-door of the Cathedral; another had seen him going and coming an entire morning through the famous street of the hundred turnings, with his head bowed as if he were seeking a pin; from the street, by night, was heard, in his house, now reading, now boisterous laughing; once the breaking of his window-panes, again the sobbing of a woman; whatever was told of him, stories of cowardice excepted, was believed.

All Seville knew him. The best society, which he frequented little, regarded him unfavorably, partly through distrust, and a little through fear; the lower class respected him because of his saving a poor old wretch from the waters of the Guadalquivir; and perhaps there was not a fan in the whole city, from that of the governor's wife to that of the most insignificant workwoman of the tobacco manufactories, which, pretending to shade from the sun the visage of its mistress, had not, at least once, let pass through its sticks a glance, either curious or provocative, straight at that wild indomitable fellow; for Menendez at twenty-four had a handsome Arabian face, framed in a forest of black hair, and his dress, foreign but elegant, fitted like mail the vigorous and manly outlines of his well-formed body. Such was Menendez; or such, at least, he was up to the last day of the seventh month of his stay in Seville, the date of his great change.

His friend Don Hermógenes, still living, remembers that day as if it were yesterday, and asserts that from that day he revealed the change.

"Manuel," he said to him, "thou art a wild fellow; this is not the way to live; thou'rt killing thyself; thou need'st a strong love to subdue thee; as yet thou hast ever been master; now thou need'st to obey; thou need'st to find a soul stronger than thine; thou need'st to find a mistress."

"I have found her," replied Menendez, smiling.

"Who is she?" asked Don Hermógenes with an incredulous air.

"Fermina!" said Menendez.

"Fermina?" cried his friend; "Fermina of the Triana Suburb? Fermina of Granada, the *princess?*"

Menendez nodded yes.

Don Hermógenes bounded with a spring to the window and cried out solemnly: "Sevillians, Don Manuel Menendez is dead!"

II.

A month later, Manuel Menendez was another being. Every Sevillian, who had a capricious little head to govern, took breath. Menendez was no more seen either at the Villa Christina or at the ring or at the San Fernando. One wishing to find him would have had to pass the iron bridge, turn to the left, then proceed along the river down to the end of the Triana Suburb, ascend to the second floor of a white house just opposite the Torre del Oro, and look through the keyhole into a modest little chamber, shaded by the trees of the right bank of the Guadalquivir. There would he be seated, at the feet of the strangest and most beautiful creature over whom his Saracen's brow had ever bent and pouring out his soul in a torrent of loving and senseless words, which she heard in silence, working at a wreath of flowers.

"Fermina," he was saying to her in a low voice: "thou art a mystery. Thou art a creature of another planet. From what world art thou come? How didst thou happen to love a man? I could swear that there was

once a time when thou hadst azure hair and red orbs! Why dost thou never laugh? Thou affrightest me. I am not willingly alone with thee. Thou, with those eyes, shouldst see something or some one which I do not see, but which, all the same, is here, beside me, seeing thee. Thy soul must be one transmigrated, thy voice assumed, and, forsooth, thy tongue is not Spanish. Perhaps, shouldst thou speak to me suddenly with thine own voice, it would petrify me. However, I am content to be loved by thee; thy love is a link which binds me to the supernatural. Tell me the truth. Whom hast thou loved in the other life? I am jealous of an inhabitant of Sirius."

At these words, Fermina, with a rapid and vigorous movement of the hand, disordered all his hair, and Menendez gave a cry of love. Then all at once, she knit her brows and fixed a suspicious look upon a slight red mark on his neck.

"At what look'st thou?" asked the young man wonderingly.

"Nothing," replied she; "but—look out, Manuel!" And after some moments she added coldly—"I would go to poignard a queen."

III.

Fermina was truly one to inspire, in any one who saw her, the odd fancies which passed through Menendez's head: her nature, her beauty, and her life were equally singular. In the Triana Suburb, they called her the *princesa;* the young men in good earnest, the women in irony; but these last more than others felt that she merited truly the honor of the nickname.

She was perhaps the tallest girl of the quarter; Menendez, who would have made a fine cuirassier of the royal guard, exceeded her by only half-a-head. Her eyes, dark and sad, and her wide eyebrows which met, gave to her brunette face, of somewhat African mould, an expression almost threatening, which changed at once into sweetest gayety on the opening of her full and mobile lips. However, as Menendez said, she smiled but once a day; and usually kept her eyes half-shut, as

if disdainful. She wore a rose in her hair, a mantilla of white lace, a black bodice, a rose-colored skirt, and two little boots of delicate make, fitting closely her baby feet and fine, nervous ankles. This was the invariable dress in which once each week Fermina showed herself to the thousand curious glances, loving, eager, impertinent, bold, which showered on her from all sides. Still, nobody dared to accost her, not even when she was alone, since it was known that the three or four audacious hands which had been raised toward her, in the first week of her stay in Seville, had been withdrawn covered with blood.

"Either she is an angel," they said, "or she is a demon;" but none felt quite sure which it was.

It was said that she had come from Granada; it was known that she lived alone; it was believed that she lived by her work; and about the rest they could only conjecture. Neither her fellow-lodgers, nor the few girls with whom she exchanged a greeting, knew more of her doings than the casual passer in the street. She had fallen in love with Menendez, and Menendez was mad with love for her. They adored each other; were proud of each other; they would look long at each other, with profound attention, without smiling; they feared each other. Through excess of love, they would treat each other sometimes in violent, brutal ways which provoked on either side tears of fury, and ended in showers of kisses searing as red-hot iron; and sometimes they would feel expansions of tenderness which left them prostrated.

Only one thing disturbed the felicity of Menendez; a vague and intermittent feeling of jealousy, which she, without meaning to, nourished, repulsing him with a pride that, to Menendez, seemed over-disdainful and therefore not sincere. But he mistook; for Fermina felt truly more than contempt; she felt absolute horror for all those low, base sentiments which usually accompany love, even the purest, in ordinary souls.

"Manuel," she had once said to him, "on the day when thou wilt believe me capable of having deceived thee, of being a despicable creature, my love will be

dead. Think of it well. I am not a woman like other women; thou shouldst not be a man like other men. You men are almost all of you cowardly. I have loved thee, because thou hast not appeared so to me. Never become so. I am proud. I have given to thee my honor; respect it. Do not sport with my love. I am not of those who pardon. If love once falls from my heart, it will never enter there. Fermina has told thee once that she loves thee; let it suffice thee for life. Lay these words deeply to thy heart's heart, Menendez."

IV.

They loved, and all Seville knew it, or rather saw it. They would go walking at night among the Oriental plane-trees of the *Delicias de Cristina;* they would go boating on the Guadalquivir, as far as San Juan d'Aznalfarache, passing the burning hours under the shade of the oranges; and very seldom it was that one seeing Fermina kneeling before the great high altar of the Cathedral would not, a moment later, discover in the shadow of some neighboring chapel the elegant and motionless form of Menendez. On the street, they were viewed universally with that bitter-sweet feeling of envy which the sight of two happy, proud, and comely lovers usually arouses in young people.

They passed, as two princes, among the murmurs of the crowd, Fermina looking beyond the heads, Menendez seeking in vain to meet her glance; they threw their love in the face of Seville; bore their felicity as a triumph; and wherever they passed, they left behind a large wake of wounded pride and of bruised affections. By degrees, however, Fermina had gained the sympathy of a great part of the feminine sex of her class; many had bent the head before her invincible pride; she was considered quite as an ornament of the quarter; she was taken as a model; she had inspired imitators. There were many jades and wanton gipsies beginning to walk with heads thrown back, and eyes half-closed, displaying from their corsages the handle of a dagger which they would never have used.

V.

In this state of affairs, came a sudden revulsion in the soul of Menendez. No one in Seville knew the reason of it, save the one, or ones, immediately involved; but those who knew his character were not surprised at all. In certain natures exists, always complete and ready, the formidable engine of suspicion, requiring only a name thrown out—a glance given—to crush the strongest affection. Who, at some time in his life, has not been either the victim or guilty of one of these sudden gusts of passions? Some tiny doubt, passing one day through the mind, obtains, in the line of a letter, in the word of a friend, in some insignificant and accidental event, a fatal hold which, as a fishing-line, brings the evil feeling of jealousy or suspicion slowly up from the obscure depths of the soul, where it lay buried, and places it under our eyes, like some disgusting insect, agitating with horrible fury his hundred arms, eager for prey.

Cast down for a moment, we renew courage and faith, and crush the little monster. But in vain. Already from every haunt of memory, like a crowd of bad little genii, come forth a thousand forgotten recollections, of fleeting smiles, of half-words, of scarcely perceptible movements of eyebrows and of lips, of a door ajar, of a noise, of steps, of a rustling, of a whispering, of a shadow, which first effervesce confusedly in the head; then they meet, join, gain strength, fire, and word; denounce, affirm, prove, upset the heart and reason, put in hand dagger or pen; excite to unpardonable crime or offence in less time than the direct evidence of the truth would have impelled us to act.

When this befell Menendez, it was eleven o'clock at night. He was at home just opposite a small table. He had a letter in his hand. At the first moment, he feared that he was going crazy: he jumped to his feet, dashed to the window, and remained for a time motionless as a statue, one hand to his head, the other to his heart, looking fixedly out into the square. Then he

gave a suffocated cry of anguish and of rage, and rushed out of the house.

He crossed like an arrow the *Plaza del Trionfo*, turned about at the *Caridad*, almost running he passed beyond the Torre del Oro, leaped into a boat, gained the right bank of the river, dashed into the house of Fermina, and knocked at the door. Fermina was not there!

By an extraordinary chance, she had not as yet been able to get home, and, to the misfortune of both, this absence at this hour tallied unexpectedly with Menendez's suspicions. It was to him an accusation, a proof, a malediction.

He remained as one petrified before the door. The sorrow of the lover was already dead within his heart, leaving chafing there nothing but the ferocious wrath of his wounded pride. A satanic thought swept through his mind. He at once descended the stairs and went on a run toward home. Arrived at the bridge, he stopped.

Another thought had, as it were, struck him, crushing the first. "And suppose it were not true?" he asked himself, and for a moment his soul thrilled. But a fatality pursued him. At the instant there passed beside him a woman who looked him in the face, and running away said to him: "Fermina deceives thee!"

At these words, anger, surging again impetuously, clouded his intellect and drove it forth as one of the lost. To cap the misfortune, re-entering his room, he found a letter from Fermina which said: "To-morrow morning I shall not be at home"; and this announcement also wretchedly verified the idea of premeditation on her part.

Then Menendez totally lost the light of reason, shouted, laughed, cursed, clutched the pen, wrote in large characters on a sheet of paper the name of Fermina and an epithet,—a horrible insult; then, flying out of the house with this sheet, he returned to Fermina's house; fastened, with convulsive hands, this infamous libel to the door, and gnashing his teeth, plunged down-stairs.

Arrived at the foot, he stopped; he heard that door open, saw the stairs illuminated, and almost at the same instant, heard a despairing cry, and the noise of a falling body.

After a few moments, he heard other doors open,—people descend,—a woman read the notice,—and many voices break out in an indignant cry: "A lie!"

VI.

An hour later, he found himself in the state of one awaking from a frightful dream. Vainly, he had tried to reconcile and bring together again proofs, tokens, arguments, recollections, shadows. All were fled and gone with the same lightning rapidity with which they had collected and taken form and substance. As a small thing had sufficed to make him believe, so a cry had sufficed to undeceive him. He had rebounded from one certainty to another certainty; he had no longer need of proof; he had explained everything to himself; he had understood everything; he felt within and without him a solemn silence, seeing only the pale and motionless image of Fermina, and between them an abyss. He understood her; knew there would be no more pardon; felt that he had killed her. A profound abasement; a mortal dismay; a love freshly strengthened by remorse and despair; an immense wish to die; and withal a prostration of strength, preventing any definite action, mastered him.

He passed the night stretched on the ground, near the window, and in the morning at dawn he found himself, he knew not how, on the iron bridge, where he suddenly stopped as if nailed to the spot.

Fermina was advancing toward him. Scarcely seeing, he comprehended that she had observed him, and he read in her face and attitude a resolution which cut his last thread of hope.

She was dressed as on festival days and came forward with free, almost impetuous step, with head up, with eye drooped and looking straight ahead, with face pale and motionless as a mask of marble. As she neared

him, he opened his mouth to speak, but the word stayed back.

She passed without glancing at him, straight and majestic, with death in her heart, and contempt in her face, wafting toward him a wave of rose odor, and passing on without turning.

Menendez saw as it were a black veil drawn between her eyes and his, and felt that all was ended.

VII.

Everything that he did that day and the next day, he did as it were mechanically, and without energy, because he was without hope. His proud and violent character had received its first serious check, and he was as if stupefied over it.

He wrote to Fermina a long letter; there was no reply; he was not surprised, and hardly even grieved, so sure he was that this would happen. Again, he wrote to her; the letter this time came back unopened; he took it and threw it aside, not minding where. He went late in the evening with trembling heart and knocked at her door; there was a light in the window; she was at home; but the door was not opened.

An hour later he returned; the light was still there; the door remained closed. Thence, he went home and passed half the night seated at the window with his head supported in his hand.

The next day, he did not write again nor go to seek Fermina, and perhaps, had he not gone out, he would never have dared to seek her more. But he did go out, and a chance befell which decided the fate of his whole life.

It was a feast day. Wandering by chance from street to street, almost unconsciously, he found himself in the avenues of the Christina. It was the promenade hour. From the Torre del Oro to the Palace of San Telmo swarmed a brilliant and gay crowd; lively music filled the air; the sun gilded the waters of the Guadalquivir; Menendez felt himself for a moment lightened of the mortal weight of his sadness, and suffered himself to be drawn along by the current.

Suddenly, a girl passing beside him cried in his ear: "'Tis a lie, Menendez!"—and disappeared.

Menendez turned pale and tried to withdraw himself from the curious glances of those about who had heard; but almost as suddenly, another girl, distant from him about ten paces, cried out still louder: "A lie!"

Menendez turned to the opposite side, confused and dismayed, and tried to break through the crowd and get out of the passageway. But a third, a fourth, and then a group of girls of the Triana Suburb who had recognized him, cried out at his heels: "A lie, Menendez, a lie!" Many people stopped; other girls coming up repeated that cry; his name flew from mouth to mouth; the crowd opened to form a circle about him; and this was his salvation.

Taking advantage of this open space, he dashed, wild and pale as a ghost, out of the Avenue; meeting a carriage, he jumped in, and drove rapidly off, hearing still for a long way the distant cries of his persecutors.

Once within the house, he covered his face with his hands, and burst into a flood of tears, distressful and passionate.

"So the story has gone forth!" he cried. "I am the laughing-stock of Seville! I can never again show my face among people! I am despised, insulted, dishonored!"

At this point, an idea, great and new, swept through his mind; his generous soul responded to it with profound perturbation; his face lighted; every fibre took new life; all his blood kindled. Then, as though the voice of an invisible friend had whispered a supplication in his ear: "Yes," he answered in a tone of compliance: "Another trial." And he dashed out of the house.

VIII.

Fermina was working beside a lamp in a corner of the room, when she heard a light and rapid step on the stairs, and, too late, saw that she had left the door ajar. She had barely the time to rise and to drop back into her seat, when Menendez threw himself at her feet,

pressed his forehead to the ground, and cried out sobbing: "Pardon, Fermina!"

She made no reply. Her face was extremely pale, and she kept it turned toward the window. Her eyes were dilated and her lips trembled. "Fermina!" continued Menendez, with a voice which it seemed would burst his bosom. "Pardon me! I have been base and mad! Thou art an angel! I am an ill-fated creature! I have torn my heart with my hands, I have wept tears of blood. They have insulted me in the street. I believed I should go mad; I cannot live so any longer. Pardon me! Give me back my love. Do not condemn me to an eternal torture! Forget! Love me! See! I drag myself at thy feet. I beat my brow on the ground, I have no longer words—no longer tears, I no longer esteem myself. I have no longer any honor in the world. I have no longer anything but the love that tortures me, and the despair that kills me! Fermina, have pity on Menendez!"

Fermina continued to look toward the window; her face was convulsed, her heart throbbing, her whole frame agitated; she seemed doing violence to herself to obtain that which Menendez wished from her; that which she herself was waiting for, a sudden change in her own heart. Menendez with deep anxiety studied every movement of her face.

Finally, with despairing accent, she broke forth: "'Tis useless, Menendez! I cannot! I feel nothing more! I am empty! I am dead! Couldst thou thy life long supplicate me, kill thyself under my eyes, become a king, a saint, a god—it would be useless! I no more believe! I no more love! Thou hast killed me! Hast thou understood, Menendez? Hast thou perchance forgotten the thing which thou didst? Fermina had given thee her honor, and thou hast spit upon it in the face of all Seville! And this was possible! And thou wishest me to pardon thee!"

Then, making a violent effort, she composed herself, and added coldly: "Go, Menendez, leave me alone. Leave me in my grave. All is over. Farewell!"

"Think again!" said Menendez entreatingly.

Fermina freed herself from him, pointing the door to him without looking him in the face.

"Hast thou then no heart?" cried the young man, bounding to his feet with rage in his blood and a threat in his face.

Fermina looked at him. Menendez gave way, and threw himself out of the door.

IX.

As soon as he reached his home, he began forthwith preparing his things for leaving the next morning. He had decided to go and pass a month at La Rinconoda, a small village surrounded with olive trees, a short distance from the city, where lived Don Luis de Guevara, his childhood's friend—*facultativo*—or distinguished physician—who had several times offered him his house whenever he might wish to escape the intense heat of Seville. When everything was complete, he threw himself on the bed, and, for the first time since the fatal evening of his delirium, he slept.

At dawn, he awoke more tranquil, ran to the window, summoned the first carriage which he saw passing the Square, dressed, had his luggage carried down, slung his hunting-rifle over his shoulder, rapidly descended, and mounting to his place, ordered the driver to take him along the right bank of the river, opposite the Torre del Oro. A great change had come over him; he no longer seemed the being of the day before; his face no longer expressed either anxiety or grief; he was pale and bore traces of the tempest of the past days, but he seemed resolved and almost haughty.

He alighted at the house of Fermina, ascended the stairs with decided step, pushed open the door, and planted himself on the threshold, standing immovably.

Fermina gave a start of unwelcome surprise, and turned toward the window. "One only word, Fermina," said Menendez calmly.

Fermina turned her head toward him, keeping her eyes downcast.

"Art thou profoundly certain," said Menendez; "canst thou swear to me on thy honor, by thy mother's

memory, by thy soul's salvation, that the present state of thy heart is not the effect of a force thou puttest on thyself?—that thou feelest really and unalterably that thou canst love me no more?"

"Yes," replied Fermina resolutely.

"Farewell!" said Menendez, and disappeared.

X.

Fermina gave a sigh, let fall her work, and leaned her head on her hand. She saw Menendez leave without sorrow, but not without sadness. It was no longer her lover that she was losing, it is true; but none the less it was a dear image, the human form under which happiness had for the first time presented itself to her; and from which would never more be separated the recollection of the most beautiful days of her youth.

At the first moment, even while she heard the distant sound of the carriage, taking him, as she believed, away forever from Seville, she was overtaken by a sudden doubt, which made her tremble; she felt the need of questioning herself once more, of probing once more the very depths of her soul whether a spark, a hope, a promise by any chance remained.

But she questioned, probed, and found nothing left, and felt almost relief that it was so. Nay, she repeated to herself, and with greater security than before, that in that soul had never been, and never could be, the great, blind, and overpowering love that she had dreamed; the one love that her strong and proud nature could accept and return; the love of Menendez was a passing delirium of the mind, not the deep and lasting fever of the heart.

Menendez had not understood her, because he had not esteemed her; if they had been reconciled, again they would have broken off; she could only have loved him again from pity, and he would have distrusted her again on the first occasion, and with cause; in him, too, perhaps love was dead, and it was but humiliated pride and remorse which had impelled him to ask mercy and pardon; and, besides, he had said good-by with calmer mind; he began, perhaps, to grow resigned, to forget;

with time, he would have forgotten; it was better for both that all had ended thus.

"Be it so," said Fermina, sighing. "'Tis a vanished dream. I forgive him, and God be with him!" And again she bent over her work her handsome, thoughtful face.

XI.

Days passed. Nothing more was seen of Menendez in Seville. Some said he had left for Cuba; everybody believed it, and a friend or so regretted him; but the greater number recalled his name only to vituperate it.

Fermina, on the contrary, after reports of the affair had spread, had gained, even on the farther side of the Guadalquivir, a little romantic celebrity; a part of which was that all the girls of the Triana Suburb felt themselves somewhat lofty; as if the rare example she had given had, in the face of all Seville, raised the dignity of the entire feminine portion of the quarter, up to this time not generally taken seriously.

An unknown poet had written verses on the wall of her house; the wife of the Captain-General of Andalusia had given her an order for flowers, as an excuse to speak with her; the girls, meeting her on the street, said to her: "*Muy bien*, Fermina!" Everybody looked upon her with a certain respectful curiosity, and among others was a corpulent linen merchant, the husband of a wicked brunette of Badajoz, who, meeting her two days after Menendez left, exclaimed with an impulse of gratitude: "Praise be to you, *Señorita*, that you have freed us of him!" But Fermina lived more than ever retired and alone, and wholly occupied with her work, allowing herself to be seen but rarely, even by the women who were her neighbors in the house.

She was not happy, but she was calm, and thought no more about Menendez, except with a feeling of vague sadness, as she would have thought about one dead.

XII.

A fortnight had passed since the departure of Manuel Menendez.

One morning, shortly after sunrise, Fermina, seated

by the window, was working in her room. She raised her head from time to time to turn a melancholy glance toward the river, the Torre del Oro, the Christina, the distant tower of the Cathedral, a hundred places and a hundred things recalling her vanished love, and she sighed.

At such moments, she sometimes wished to be able again to love Menendez, even knowing she was never to see him again, were it for naught but to give food to her empty heart; and she went on probing within her heart; no longer indeed with fear as hitherto, but with the hope of finding there some remnant of her former affection. But she found there only contempt ready to kindle again, and she hastened to extinguish it, thrusting it away under another thought.

"Dead, dead," she said to herself, shaking her head sadly, and feeling deeply that, were Menendez again to appear before her, she would receive him as before; without experiencing the slightest doubt; without hesitating a moment as to the immutability of her heart; without having, in the least, to force herself to repeat to him: "Go, leave me alone in my grave. All is over."

The course of her thoughts was unexpectedly interrupted by a slight rustling; she turned, gave a cry, and sprang to her feet.

Menendez was before her.

Fermina composed herself quickly; but she could not help fixing for a moment a disturbed look upon him.

His face was pallid and thin; his eyes, dull; his lips, livid. He had over his shoulders his mantle and a travelling-bag, slung by a strap. He was just on the threshold of the door. His head was bent forward and his limbs trembled. He fastened on Fermina a profound gaze full of love and melancholy.

"Have you been ill?" she said to him with a slight accent of pity.

Menendez hesitated a moment and then replied faintly: "Yes, a little."

Fermina lowered her head. "And now I am going," added the young man.

"Whither?" asked Fermina without raising her head.

"To Cuba."

"To-day?"

"Now."

"For always?"

"For always."

Fermina gave a sigh, passed her hand over her brow, and then said with a pitying accent: "Good bye, Menendez; God be with thee!"

"Hast thou nothing more to say to me?" asked Menendez with a trembling voice. "Art thou ever the same?"

Fermina turned upon him a glance which revealed her heart, full of distress that she was able to give only a sad reply.

"Well," said Menendez, approaching her little table; "since we shall never see each other again, do me a favor, Fermina; accept this keepsake."

So saying, he placed on the table a small casket of mahogany with a key in the lock. "Do not reject it, Fermina, I beseech thee! 'Tis not a gift. It contains but a sheet of paper, revealing a secret which thou shouldst know; a family secret which I have revealed to none but thee; a sacred thing. Accept it, Fermina; I swear to thee, on my honor, it is necessary that thou receive it; thou wilt recognize this necessity when thou hast seen what it is, and will say I was right, and have done my duty. And now I have no more to tell thee. Good bye, Fermina! Forget me and be happy!"

Fermina wiped away a tear, and gave him her hand, turning her face aside.

Menendez covered the hand with kisses, and hurried toward the door. "Menendez!" said Fermina quickly.

Menendez turned.

"Farewell!" repeated the girl with altered voice but firmly: "I am more ill-fated than thou, for I have nothing in my heart any more! Go, Menendez! Go, and God be in all thy ways!"

Menendez went out, half-closed the door, and began slowly descending the stairs, with ear intent, suspended breath, and a heart throbbing as if it would burst. All

at once, he heard the noise of the tiny key of the casket, turning in its lock.

His limbs bent under him, and a black veil stretched before his eyes. He supported himself against the wall of the landing. Some seconds passed. Suddenly, a cry of superhuman sorrow, terror, and love resounded from top to bottom of the house. Like a thunder-stroke the door was burst open, Fermina made one bound to the foot of the stairs, threw herself before Menendez, and with despairing passion began kissing his feet, his knees, his dress, sobbing, crying, asking pardon, invoking God until her voice failed, her eyes closed, and she fell fainting. The neighbors had assembled, and among them was the Señor Luis de Guevara, who had accompanied Menendez from La Rinconoda to Seville, and was awaiting him in the street.

"Don Luis," said Menendez, as soon as he saw him, raising the fainting Fermina, and turning her so that her face could be seen: "I present to thee my wife."

In truth, fifteen days later, the Secretary of the Bull-Ring of Seville, having to send to Fermina the key of the thirtieth box *del lado de la sombra* (on the shady side) addressed the letter: "To Doña Fermina Menendez!"—and this being the first letter which she had received with the title of *doña* and with her own name united to that of her lover, she kissed thrice over the envelope and put it away to keep as some precious object.

Any other Sevillian of the sex would, however, on that day have kissed, instead of the envelope, the key; for because of the most auspicious arrival of her Majesty Queen Isabella, whom Seville was, for the first time, to see with her crown, the *impresario* of the Ring had prepared a spectacle unique in the pomps of Andalusian bull-baiting. Suffice it to say that there dashed into the arena eight bulls, purchased by weight in new doubloons, from the pastures of the most excellent Marquis of Veragua, leading breeder of Spain.

Although the spectacle was not to begin until two in the afternoon, at mid-day the Plaza was already almost full, and at the stroke not another one could enter. It was one of the finest days to be seen at

Seville in the month of September. The vast polygonal ring presented on its thirty flights of steps a marvellous confusion of dark faces and black tresses, of fans waving, and hands in air; here shone the flower of the beauty of the Triana Suburb; here were the most famous dancers of the ballet-school; hundreds of girls from the tobacco factories, with skirts either white or rose; groups of gipsy girls with bunches of flowers in hair or corsage; the most skilful, most redoubtable knife-swordsmen of the province, with their large black velvet hats, and their red and azure cinctures; all the most ardent Andalusian blood that at that time circulated from the Fair grounds to the gate of San Juan and from the *Cartuja* to the *Trinidad;* an immense gathering of loves, jealousies, caprices, joys, miseries, a continuous cross-fire of clamorous exclamations, and of furtive glances, of flowers and of smiles, of gallant words and of oranges; all this enlivened by strident music, and lighted up by a burning sun.

At two precisely, the *alguaciles* entered the arena to clear away the crowd; at the same moment a hundred faces turned almost simultaneously toward one single point, and to the general clamor suddenly succeeded a profound silence.

Fermina, dressed in white, with a great mass of flowers in her hands, with face resplendent, with a joy dignified and grave as her beauty, had appeared in her box together with Menendez; pale and smiling in the midst of a circle of friends. To the first silence succeeded, after a few moments, a long, approving, almost loving murmur. All Seville knew what had happened. On a sudden, a gipsy girl seated on the first round below the box jumped to her feet, took a rose from her hair, and throwing it at Fermina cried out: "*A ti, Doña Fermine Menendez, y Dios te dé la buena suerte!*"

Immediately after, another girl threw a bunch of flowers at Menendez and cried: "*A ti, Don Manuel Menendez,* valiant heart!"

The example was quickly imitated; from all the flights near the box, flowers commenced to rain upon the young couple, accompanied by a gay and passionate

clamor: "For thee, beautiful creature!—For thee, blood of heroes!—To you both, handsomest couple of Seville! Love each other! Good luck! Many days like these! God protect you!"

In a few minutes the enthusiasm had spread through almost the entire ring, and from every side flowers were thrown, handkerchiefs and mantillas waved, *ev-vivas* and salutes wafted; so that Fermina, overcome by the commotion, let her head fall on Menendez's shoulder, and Queen Isabella, who had already taken her place in the Royal box with her entire suite, turned to ask of the young General Serrano, who might be the personages that were throwing her subjects into confusion.

The *general bonito*, the handsome General, as was then called the future conqueror of Alcolea, came forward respectfully and said, in his softest voice: "They are a bride and groom, Majesty. The bride is the most beautiful girl of Seville, and the groom a young man who has done honor to his Andalusian blood. In a burst of jealousy, having mortally offended his affianced with an infamous libel, and not having in any other way succeeded in gaining her pardon, and the return of her love, he obtained both by presenting to her a tiny casket wherein, broken in half, was the pen which had written the libel; under the pen, a sheet of paper with his writing in blood: '*Espiazione*,' and under the sheet of paper, his own right hand."

While the Queen directed her lorgnette toward the couple, the trumpets clanged, the crowd gave a loud shout, and the first bull of the most excellent Marquis of Veragua rushed roaring into the arena.

It was unfortunate; but perhaps, as in a certain clever French tale, if the course of true love had run smoothly, the lovers might have lived to regret it. Mr. Lincoln Moore has written their charming story for this magazine, and it forms the second in our sample group of Three Romantic Stories.

AFTER FIFTY YEARS.

WHAT a fine evening it is! The lilacs are in bloom again. The moon shines down on the river just as it did on the last night I was here, fifty years ago. All these streets and buildings seem strange. At that time, a country road passed through here between stone walls and trees and meadows. The tavern where we had the ball that night was a handsome building then. I have stopped there many a time for refreshments when boating. It is deserted, ruined, gradually sinking into the river now. The young lovers row by on the other side of the stream. They say the old house is haunted. It was a fair picture that evening, with light pouring out of every casement, and lanterns hanging on the verandas over the river. I wonder if you remember it all?

You smile as though you had not forgotten it. Why do I speak of it now? Well, almost fifty years have passed. It does not seem very long; still, we are both old now, and what harm can it do,—a little talk of days gone by?

Yes, it is nearly fifty years since I have seen you. Your hair under that little lace cap is as white as snow. Then it was black and glossy as jet. You had no wrinkles then. Your cheeks were smooth and white. There was a dimple in the left one. Your eyes did not peer out of gold-rimmed glasses then. They were bright as stars—dark blue, sparkling with merriment. Your figure is a little bent, but you were quite tall then for a woman, and graceful. I thought you were queenly. Indeed, you were the prettiest girl in all the land. What! are you blushing? Well, it is true. I can close

my eyes and see you in my soul as you were then, as sweet and lovely as a water-lily. You have never changed there.

I remember the first time I ever saw you. I was walking through the shady streets of the little town. I passed by a grand old mansion. I saw beneath a great elm what I thought was a beautiful angel. It was you lying on the lawn. You had on a pink gown. You were reading, and when you heard my footsteps, you raised your eyes and met mine. We were both confused. I walked away feeling as though I had entered a new world. After that I thought only of you. You told me afterward that you were reading a romance of a handsome young prince, tall, fair-haired and daring; that when you looked up and saw me, you were startled, I was so like the ideal you were dreaming of. Do you remember?

I hurried back to my uncle's home beyond the town, and eagerly questioned my cousins concerning the beautiful vision I had seen. They told me that you were the governor's only daughter; that you were but eighteen years of age, but that you already had several suitors for your hand. They warned me not to fall in love with you, as a handsome young officer of the garrison near by was said to have won your heart. I found that you were the belle of all the land.

This information only made me love you more. I felt certain that I could not live without you. I could not imagine that any one else could love you as I did. Every afternoon after that, I rode to town in order to pass by the governor's mansion. During the evenings I paraded back and forth on the sidewalk like a sentinel, and all the time I kept repeating your name. During these feverish evenings it was not very consoling to note the regular appearance of a visitor, nightly passing under the trees to the door-step. When the door opened, I could see his tall, erect figure standing in the light. Then the door would close and there would be sounds from the open windows of laughter and music. I knew that the visitor was the young officer. He and I were introduced one day in the town,

and I remember how, seemingly by instinct, we conceived a deep antipathy to each other. Even on our first meeting we approached close to the border of insulting language. He was a handsome, dashing fellow, I was forced to confess. Splendid, soft, dark eyes and a heavy, silken mustache were his two most seductive attractions. To know that this hated but dangerous rival was enjoying a tête-à-tête with the beautiful girl, whom in my unreasonable love I already regarded as my sweetheart, while I was obliged to promenade the sidewalk alone, seemed very bitter and cruel to me.

A week passed before I saw you again. I was riding along the high bank of the river where it curves like a horse-shoe around some meadow-land. I was gazing down at the waters dreaming of you, when I heard a sound of laughter and of horses' hoofs. I looked up and was startled to see you riding toward me, in the company of several young ladies and gentlemen. My handsome friend the officer was among them. My heart beat violently and my face flushed as I passed close to you. You wore a dark-green suit, and your face was so white that I thought at the time you were like a water-lily. It was then that I noticed your long black lashes. I could scarcely see your eyes. You told me afterward that you peeped at me and that you thought I looked like a gallant knight on my spirited horse. Do you remember?

I was so excited that day that I could scarcely eat a mouthful. My uncle asked me if I had seen the governor's daughter again. He was a wise man—my uncle.

It was not long afterward that you and I became acquainted. It was at a party that I attended with my cousins. You were there. I saw nothing else that golden night. You were dressed in cream-colored silk. Your beautiful white arms and shoulders were bare. You wore a necklace of pearls, and there were yellow roses pinned to your dress. I was dazzled by your beauty when you entered the room, and when I was presented to you, I lost all control of myself. I stammered and tried to clasp your hand, stopping in my at-

tempt abruptly; but you, smiling kindly, shook hands with me. You told me afterward that you were a little confused yourself, that you could scarcely speak at first. Do you remember?

It was astonishing, though, how soon we were eagerly conversing. Our thoughts flowed on together like two brooks that meet in the forest and go dancing together through sunlight and shadow. It was that night that I thought that your eyes were as black as coals, and that I noticed how fresh and red your lips were. That bright evening fled so fast that I did not realize till the affair was over that I had entirely monopolized the society of the belle of the evening. When I bade you good-night as you left the company with your parents, I noticed a young man standing in the hallway, with a gloomy expression on his handsome face. It was my friend the officer, and he gave me an ugly look. Little did I care for the officer's anger. I was mad with happiness that night. What dreams, what fancies filled my soul! You say that you, too, were transported that night? I wish I had known it then!

The next afternoon I met you down-town as you were coming out of a shop to enter your carriage. We stopped and talked, and I arranged to call on you the next evening. It was then in the bright sunlight that I was surprised to discover that your eyes were dark blue, instead of black.

How well I remember that first evening when I called on you! I could not sleep the night previous, I was so excited. The day passed tediously. I attired myself with great elaboration, and an hour before the time when I had agreed to call, I was restlessly pacing the streets glancing at my apparently motionless time-piece; but the important hour arrived at last. As I entered the gate, my courage began to fail. I feared lest some more favored suitor might already be installed, and I should prove an unwelcome intruder. I wondered who would open the door, whether a servant or some member of the family. I dreaded lest it might be the governor himself, for I suspected that he did not regard me with favor. The great watch-dog barked

savagely as I walked toward the house. You had laughingly assured me that he was always securely chained to a strong post. I mounted the stairs with a bold step, rang the bell fiercely, and waited in a state of nervous dread. How agreeably was I surprised, and how completely were my fears dispelled, when you opened the door yourself, looking perfectly beautiful in the lighted hallway. Your cheeks were slightly flushed, and your eyes were as bright as stars. That evening my love for you increased a hundred-fold. There were other members of your family present. Your aunt was always in the room, but still we were together, and I heard you play on the harp and sing for me several sweet old ballads. As I walked home that night, my soul seemed to mount among the stars.

The next night, as my cousin and I were passing by your father's grounds, I heard the sound of merry laughter from the gayly lighted house and I distinguished plainly the hated voice of the young officer. I accompanied my cousin to call on a young lady, a wealthy banker's daughter, but I was miserable the whole evening. I seemed to hear you playing on the harp and singing love-songs to the dark-eyed officer. I did not admit it then, but I was intensely jealous of the handsome fellow. You say that you were jealous of the banker's daughter? Yes, I know I called there several times, but it was to please my cousin. I never fancied her. She was too loud and boisterous for my taste. So you were jealous, were you? I never thought of that.

Do you remember the boat-ride on the river? It was the only time we were really alone. Maybe you don't imagine how near I came to proposing to you that day? Do you say that you half-expected several times I would? Well, you were right. The truth is that I had decided at the first opportunity to tell you that I loved you. I thought that the boat-ride would be the very occasion, so with mingled hopes and fears I looked forward to that eventful day. I cannot tell you how many times I rehearsed my part in the expected drama, nor what beautiful speeches I had prepared, never to be

uttered. Yet I regard that little journey up the winding river as the brightest episode in my life. As I rowed along, I could look at you. You sat in the stern and had on the pink gown I liked so much. We passed by weeping willows, dipping their branches into the water; the cemetery in the woods on the hill; and the mysterious island with its deep woods. We did not talk much. Your eyes were cast down most of the time, as though you were in a pensive mood, but occasionally I saw them glance shyly at me. I don't know why I should have been so sure, but I felt positive that you loved me, and I was on the point of telling you how I adored you a dozen times as we proceeded up the still river. At last, I rowed into a little streamlet which met the river in the woods. Green leaves were spread over its quiet surface and pure white lilies floated here and there. The light was soft and subdued. I felt my heart beat violently. I trembled, and I know that my face was pale as I leaned toward you and seized your little hand in mine.

Just then we heard voices in the woods. You snatched your hand away instantly, as two ladies, one of whom was your aunt, appeared at the bank of the stream. They were delighted to see us, for they had lost their boat and would have been obliged to walk several miles, but for our timely appearance. We humbly took them in as passengers and I rowed back down the river in the twilight, talking to your aunt and her friend in as entertaining a manner as I could, while you reclined in the stern, silent but occasionally smiling slyly at some of my efforts to sustain a conversation with the two ladies. We all walked up the hill to your father's gate, and I was obliged to say good-by without telling you my wonderful secret.

Soon after that, a grand ball was to take place at the tavern. All the country was excited. I sent you an invitation and anxiously waited for a reply. I feared that your parents would not approve of me as your escort, even if you should be so kind as to prefer me to other suitors who would doubtless extend you an invitation. More than anything else, I dreaded that the

charming young officer would be the favored one. When I rode to town for the mail on the day following I received a dainty little envelope. I opened it with trembling fingers, but I rode home feeling in the gayest mood, for the little note said that its beautiful writer would be pleased to accompany me to the grand ball at the tavern.

Do you remember that a few days before the ball you were taken ill with a fever? When I heard that my lovely partner was sick, I called at once. You told me how disappointed you were because, although you felt well enough to go, your mother, you feared, would not allow you to attend the ball. I was sorry enough to give up the idea of appearing there with the governor's beautiful daughter; but I agreed with your mother that it would be dangerous to your health to go. I cheered your sad spirits all that I could, while secretly I resolved that, instead of attending the ball myself, I would spend the evening with you, and, if the chance appeared, that I would ask you to be my partner forever, whether you were sick or well.

The night of the ball, I was later than I expected in departing for town. The tavern was gayly lit up, and its roof was shining in the moonlight. I was so eager to see you that I did not even stop to obtain a glimpse of the assemblage, but rode rapidly away beyond the sound of the music. When I arrived at the gate of the governor's mansion, I was surprised at the gloomy appearance of the house; not a light could I see. I dismounted, hurried to the door and rang the bell. There was an appalling silence. Twice more I rang the bell and waited. No one came to the door. Almost paralyzed with astonishment and wonder, I turned and slowly leaving the house, mounted my horse and started back on the road to the tavern. I felt certain that you would not have been left sick and alone in the house.

Horrible suspicions tortured my heart as I rode along faster and faster till I reached the tavern. I rushed into the building and took one glance into the ballroom. The brilliant assemblage and bright light dazed me for a second. A dance had just ended and all were

promenading in confusion. Suddenly, directly before me, in full uniform, I saw the young officer with you leaning on his arm. He was bending his smiling face to yours. Your cheeks were flushed and your eyes as bright as fire. You were dressed in purest white. When I saw you, I felt my heart turn icy cold; sharp pains crossed my chest. Beads of perspiration stood on my brow. The shock of your treachery was very cruel. I turned, staggered out of the tavern and, mounting my horse rode away, feeling as though I were in the midst of a frightful dream.

And now you say that they made you believe that I was glad you were sick, so that I could be free to escort the banker's daughter! You say that you loved me and that, stung by jealousy, you insisted on your parents' taking you to the ball; that there you were joined by the officer. You say that when you saw me at the ball-room door, alone, dusty, pale and distracted, you realized how terribly you had been mistaken; that leaving the captain, you ran to detain me, but it was too late. No, I never heard of all that. I crossed the seas, and fought in foreign armies, and reared a family in foreign lands. I heard but once from home. They said that you were to marry the officer. I tried to forget you. I became rich and honored, but never happy. I have lived that night over a million times, bitterly regretting that I did not wait to hear your explanation. I am old, feeble, white-haired to the world, but in my soul I am still the hot-headed lad of fifty years ago and you are the governor's beautiful daughter. It will always be so. What!—are you weeping? Never mind. We can't understand these things. I must go now. Your husband,—I hope he is well? What is that? You say that you never married? And it has been fifty years! Ah, me! We can't understand. I must go back to my hotel. It seems exactly like that night. The lilacs are in bloom, and the moon shines on the river; but these buildings and streets are strange, and the tavern is old and ruined. They say—and it is true, I know—that it is haunted.

The background of realism against which this charming little love-story is set, adds much to its effectiveness. It is by Henri de Chennevières, and is translated for ROMANCE by Harriet Edwards. It forms the third in our group of Romantic Stories.

CÉCILE'S FIRST JOURNEY.

August 10, 1894.—I AM nineteen years old, and I leave the Convent of the Sacred Heart to-day. Among the companions of my first communion three are married, and the others are already women of the world. As for me, I am still a school-girl, and from my earliest recollection I have lived among strangers. A few small successes in my classes at first made me believe in my lucky star; but when sixteen years had passed, I would gladly have exchanged all my prizes for a mother's tender care, a paternal roof, and a small *dot*. Alas! I possess none of these; I have been an orphan from the cradle, poor from the day I was born; and I leave in half-an-hour for my aunt's home, where I shall play the part of an encumbering package. Yes, "package" is the right word for the situation; as we leave day after to-morrow for Russia. My aunt travels every summer. Cécile Montargle will be extra baggage.

August 11.—My aunt, Madame Gallien, is agreeable, pretty, but not very sympathetic. She is thirty-five, and has beautiful brown eyes, black hair, a clear complexion, a distinguished appearance, gowns from the best makers, a beautiful *appartement* on the Boulevard Haussmann, an income of sixty thousand livres a year, and a little boy of seven, the worst-trained child in the world. My uncle has been dead five years; I think he is forgotten at home and elsewhere; this morning I was very much astonished, apropos of this subject. An old lady was saying farewell.

"How little, young, and delicate you are!" she said to my aunt. "You have drunk of the fountain of youth. Is M. de Lestigues still alive?"

My aunt blushed and became thoughtful. That seemed so droll to me! After showing the visitor out, she stood looking in the glass for some time.

Suddenly I had a mischievous idea:

"She is thinking of marrying; she would do much better if she would think of marrying her niece."

Since that moment I have tried in vain to keep from thinking of my marriage and hers. My marriage! I am poor, no one will want me. Nevertheless, I am not suited to a religious life. What will become of me?

August 12.—We leave this evening, aunt, little Maurice, Fraulein Bertha, and I. Two big trunks, a small one, two bags, and three rugs. Day before yesterday my aunt gave me fifty francs with which to make purchases.

I have selected some gowns for the trip, and they are such a success that Fraulein is envious. That for the train is in gray wool at seventy-five centimes a yard, with cape and toque to match; all made by myself, but with so much style! The one for the hotel is of red crêpe, trimmed with heavy old lace; to go with it, I have a large straw hat covered with poppies—if Mother Angélique could see it! The third is for the theatre, casino, and receptions, of white muslin with a pale pink sash. I am dressed in my travelling gown, and can find no resemblance to the little school-girl of yesterday. If I were pretty, how amusing it would be! But no; a consumptive thinness, a pale complexion, straw-colored hair, a silly smile, and big, cat-like eyes would never make any one handsome. My aunt is disconsolate about her gown; I can find nothing at which to grumble excepting the bill—five hundred francs for a travelling-costume; and the hat, a simple turban, cost sixty francs—the price of my entire wardrobe!

August 13.—I am writing in the cars on the way to Berlin, after a terrible night in the sleeper. Truly the convent-dormitory is an ideal in comparison with these hothouses. One might as well lie on the shelf of a bookcase in the full glare of the noonday sun. Maurice is odious; that child thinks I must be the slave of his caprices. In spite of all my resolutions, I have lost

patience several times. It was too much when my aunt and Fraulein burst out laughing. I hear of nothing but my good fortune, and my aunt's kindness; still, I do not find myself so very happy. No doubt my disposition is at fault. This morning we passed through Cologne; to see the cathedral towers throw out their huge laces against the hazy sky, and to feel one's self carried past in an express train, was heart-breaking. Now we are crossing Westphalia, the dreariest country imaginable. After a German breakfast of sandwiches, and a long siesta, we arrived in Hanover. The country is less rich but more pleasing. A low mountain range breaks the monotony of the plain; the red skirts, the embroidered aprons, and the white blouses of the peasants brighten the fields like the poppies, bluets, and daisies.

We are in Prussia! Marshes, stunted woods, forlorn villages, a sombre sky, and an unfruitful soil—a pitiful picture!

August 16.—Good news! To-morrow we go to the court-ball; I have a fairy godmother. That must be explained. Well, Thursday, in the hotel drawing-room, Maurice crushed the paw of a large greyhound. A cry of pain brought an angry mistress from an obscure corner of the room; the Princess Tsarwalki and her maid of honor ran forward. The latter, a thriving specimen of unmannerliness in servitude, began to cover the poor animal with awkward caresses. My aunt humbly offered her apologies to the indignant Princess. Fraulein led forward the penitent Maurice, and I stood by like a goose. Little by little, the dog's mistress grew calm, and my aunt's excuses merged in conversation.

"It is a misfortune to have a child so badly brought up," said the Princess.

"He is not wicked, madame, but mischievous!"

"Your daughter, at least, does not resemble him."

"My daughter! I have no daughter, and if I had one, she would not be as old as my niece, I beg you to believe," said my aunt, somewhat piqued.

"What is the little one's name?"

"Cécile Montargle."

"Montargle? I know that name, and her face also—let me see—I remember—it was in France—I have it!—my physician at Plombières."

"Yes, my brother-in-law was physician of the establishment at Plombières."

"This is certainly his daughter; she looks as much like him as—as—as his daughter. No, not entirely; in the walk, in the expression, there is something of the mother."

"So much the better, Madame. My sister made a foolish marriage, as we all did. One has a small *dot*, is very ambitious; one becomes an old maid; one's pretentions are lowered."

I was astonished—my aunt—a foolish marriage—she, who is so wealthy, such a beautiful woman!

"But this little girl interests me very particularly," replied the Princess; "she is the god-daughter of my good friend Lydia Stapmonska, the wife of Baron de Neuschberg, one of the foremost men of Berlin. I will take you to her to-morrow,—to-day—if you wish. How charmed she will be to see little Cécile!"

"Madame, I have never heard Madame de Neuschberg spoken of; nevertheless, she might easily be Cécile's godmother, for I had quarrelled with my sister at that time."

Here I took the liberty of interrupting the conversation.

"Aunt, I have my certificate of baptism in my bag. I will go find it."

The facts being established, the Princess, who is returning to St. Petersburg after two months of the Swiss air-cure, arranged to meet us at Madame de Neuschberg's at five o'clock. I ran off to put on my red dress, and my aunt and I then went out to inspect Berlin.

How dear the carriages are! Every one must be a millionaire! This time my aunt shares my surprise; one franc, twenty-five centimes, for a quarter-of-an-hour. It is preposterous, a robbery!

The town does not please me. The improvements of all kinds, the decorations from all countries, are lavish

enough to make Berlin a magnificent capital. But though good intentions are manifest, feeling is often at fault. The imposing fronts of the houses are overloaded with mouldings, bas-reliefs, porticoes; the ornamented signboards of the shops meet the eye everywhere. The two museums are built in the form of Greek temples; but under the gloomy Prussian sky their large porticoes are nonsensical. One can say the same of the statues; nothing is more pitiful than to see these unfortunate goddesses, blackened by rain and the smoke from the factories, shivering under their scanty draperies. The excellent combination of tinted bricks in the Hôtel de Ville, the Bank, and the Post-office are much more in harmony with the country. But the glory of Berlin is the Thiergarten, with its venerable trees, its peaceful quiet, its thrifty bushes, its solitary walks, scented in spring, empurpled in autumn, where the laborers and shop-keepers go to rest on Sunday. If I believed in metempsychosis, I would ask to become one of the animals in the Zoölogical Gardens of Berlin. They are so well lodged in buildings recalling the architecture of their own countries; they are so well cared for, and so admired! I especially envy the giraffes; the enchanting little mosque which serves for their habitation is situated on the edge of a lake which is peopled with white swans; a gap in the trees allows them a glimpse of the fashionable restaurant framed in green bushes.

At five o'clock we were at the Neuschbergs'. The Princess arrived, and we were conducted through a commonplace suite of rooms to a delightful little Louis Seize boudoir, where we were received by the most fascinating little lady ever dreamed of. She is about forty years old, but looks scarcely twenty-five. When we were presented, my godmother was astonished, kissed me and overwhelmed me with attentions, talked of my father and mother, offered us Russian tea, promised us an invitation to the court-ball to-morrow, and begged us to come to see her again before our departure. And then I found myself once more in the street, alone with my aunt, a poor little school-girl, just as if I had no fairy godmother.

August 18.—My first ball! How odd it is for a French patriot in this generation to have gone to her first ball in Berlin! If I were a young man, I could not endure to hear my wife tell of such a début.

My poor muslin gown is very much rumpled, frayed, and a little torn around the bottom. I shall employ my afternoon mending it. My aunt was most beautiful yesterday in a long train of Nile-green pékin with a feather border, a lace front over pink satin, three rows of pearls on her neck, a garland of diamonds on her corsage, an aigrette in her hair, and earrings as big as olives. We left the hotel at ten o'clock; five minutes later we were at the palace.

The carriage drew up in a spacious court; a crowd of uniforms, dress-coats, and waves of gauze were gathered in the vestibule, which was decorated with rare marbles and a profusion of gilt mouldings. A stairway without steps on other occasions enabled riders to ascend to the first floor; but that evening it served to give a very ungraceful appearance to the *gnädige Frauen* invited by the Empress. The view of the drawing-rooms completely dazzled me. The lights were indefinitely repeated in the mirrors, in the crystals of the chandeliers, and in the highly polished floors. The gilded mouldings of the ceilings rivalled in brilliancy the magnificent hangings. The tables, the chairs, the candelabra, the clocks, the vases adorned with marbles, ivory, silver, and gold shone with a thousand bright fires. In the room reserved for the most notable guests was displayed the luxury of the German sovereigns—huge plates of silver-gilt, and gigantic cups and saucers. Another room surrounded by a porphyry colonnade redoubled my admiration. The throne-room was so crowded that we ordinary mortals had to stand half-an-hour in the doorway. I was permitted to bow to the Empress, and my godmother, my aunt, and I then went and sat in a side room which was used for dancing. I waited, a little ashamed of my part, which I thought would probably enough be that of a wall-flower. From pity, no doubt, many young men asked me to dance. A large fair man came back four times. At the beginning, I

did not know how to reply to their invitations, for I did not know my partners, and like a goose I asked them: "Monsieur, is this your waltz?"

Little by little, I became accustomed to it, but then I was tired and had a headache. I would have given anything in the world to have left, but my aunt was not ready; surrounded by five or six men and three women, she shone in her corner, completely forgetting me. So I found a small empty room, where in the silence I gradually composed myself, and stood pressing my cheeks against the cool window-panes. Soon I had recovered sufficiently to find pleasure in the cotillion. The favors seemed magnificent to me. My aunt thought them modest, and gave me all of hers, to Fraulein's great vexation. We leave for St. Petersburg this evening in company with our Princess.

August 19.—Alas! am I culpable, or only unfortunate? For the first time in my life I find myself repeating that formidable word—injustice. Yes, my aunt is selfish and unjust to me. But she does not realize it. Since yesterday morning we have been travelling so as to reach St. Petersburg this evening. At Berlin we got into the Princess Tsarwalki's compartment, my aunt being perfectly delighted at this new and aristocratic friendship. It was entirely different at the end of an hour. The Princess never travels without her maid and her big dog. An incalculable number of baskets, bags, rugs, portmanteaus, and bundles littered the limited space left empty by the bulky Princess, who sat with her feet on the opposite seat. Her maid-of-honor lounged on a heap of parcels, the dog was stretched out on the floor, and we stowed ourselves away in a corner, trying with our small baggage to make a barrier against the disorder and rubbish. At Koenigsberg it was still worse; the portmanteaus were opened, and their contents—provisions, shawls, toilet necessaries, books, papers—were thrown pell-mell all over the car. The dog had covered the seats with his white hairs; the Princess with hair let down looked like a witch; and her maid yawned and stretched sleepily. My aunt, excusing herself on account of Maurice's restlessness,

sought refuge in another compartment; as I was about to follow her:

"No, stay here, Cécile; we must not lose this connection."

To complete my misfortunes, I was left with all the packages; they have not taken them yet, and to carry them to the custom-house will break my arms. Well, I shall not complain unless Fraulein and my aunt jeer and find fault with my walk and untidy appearance, which is caused by their selfishness. No, I do not wish to think any more about it. To quarrel with my aunt will not benefit me; she is my only protector. It is better to look at the desolate country we have been crossing for the last thirty hours. The further north one travels, the more deserted is the country, the more barren the ground, and the few houses are of the rudest description. At present they are the most wretched looking huts, in the midst of waste land. Three hours more, and my torture will be ended.

August 21.—We are in Peter the Great's town. The hotel is comfortable, but dirty, and I dread the night in my remote little room. My aunt, to quiet her conscience, locks me in. But I cannot sleep for fear of fire or sickness; the bell-rope does not reassure me; servants are never at their posts.

St. Petersburg is a city of immensity; river, streets, squares, gardens, palaces, statues are colossal. One must not expect the finish, daintiness and gracefulness of a labored picture; it is a superb sketch.

We arrived as in a dream; the hotel omnibus was being repaired, so the proprietor's carriage was sent to meet us. Without having time to realize where we were, we found ourselves driven through a street of great dimensions. The top of the carriage was down, and the fresh evening air cut the cheeks. The driver, wrapped in a large Russian coat, the peculiar cap of his class on his head, held with difficulty two fine black horses free and untamed under their almost invisible harness. The immense avenue seemed deserted; pedestrians passed unseen; light carriages of an odd shape glided by with the quietness and quickness of ghosts.

For a long time the carriage continued in this street, then crossed a gigantic bridge. I saw a black gulf, and supposed it was the Neva. Soon the façade of an immense hotel came into view, and the horses rushed under a portico whose columns were supported by caryatides.

Princess Tsarwalki has called upon us; she is to take us to the Imperial garden party at Peterhof to-morrow. We go from court to court, from fête to fête.

August 24.—We leave for Moscow in an hour. My aunt conceals her perplexity imperfectly; I too am much agitated. It is not without reason. At the Emperor's garden party my aunt met a Polish prince, as fascinating as Don Juan, as rich as a Jew, noble as a king, and as much in love as—I know not what. Aunt already sees herself a princess. I am her confidante; the part was assigned me because of the lack of another, Fraulein being judged incapable of holding her tongue with Maurice. But I must tell the whole story of an incident which may be of great significance to my future.

I do not care for the exterior of the Peterhof palace; the columns, the numberless white mouldings on a light orange ground involuntarily recall the frosted cakes of my childhood. A crowd of guests, mostly young girls and very young men, filled the entrance hall, which was decorated with a great number of pictures hung close together without frames, representing the different symbols of Russia; a whimsical decoration, if ever there was one. A suite of rooms luxuriously furnished, filled with art-objects, with inlaid floors, hung with expensive brocades, and doors ornamented with gold, led to a room all in white damask where the Empress patiently received the ladies. Our courtesy made, we went to the buffet, which was in a vast hall, where hung a picture of Peter the Great, guiding a fishing-boat in the storm on Lake Ladoga. Afterward we sat near the Princess Tsarwalki in the midst of a fairy-like room, furnished with sofas and chairs entirely white, like the panelling of the walls; magnificent green plants were placed against this dazzling whiteness. Having met several ladies and young girls, we were led into the gardens,

but first of all to the balcony to see the great fountain. Over steps of iridescent gold and silver, an enormous mass of waters fell from the terrace to the sea; statues of gold threw forth huge jets; on either side sombre green trees rested the eye, and harmonized with the other colors. The Russians are very kind, almost excessively so. We had our hands full to answer them, and to admire the immense park, majestic as a forest, as well cared for as a garden, where at almost every step the eye encountered the most marvellous landscape gardening and wonderful hydraulic inventions. The most remarkable was a quadrangular colonnade, where rose-colored marble alternated with jets of blue water. A bench invited the promenaders to rest before this delightful spectacle. As we came up, a young man was sitting there; at the approach of this cloud of graceful figures, displaying the entire gamut of heavenly tints, he rose and took refuge in the shrubbery. I heard him murmur: "Adorable, adorable!" as my aunt passed. And then he followed us from place to place, and met us at every crossing, as if by accident. On our return to the palace the young Prince Tsarwalki came to his aid with an introduction in which I was included. From that moment the Polish Prince Volgoroski constituted himself our knight, followed us everywhere, and was quite disconsolate at our departure.

Yesterday two of M. Volgoroski's cards within the space of four hours. My aunt rewarded a third attempt by an interview of twenty minutes. The poor man overwhelms us with attentions—two bouquets, two boxes of bonbons for my aunt and me, a miniature drosky for Maurice, chocolates for Fraulein, and a stock of compliments large enough for me to have a share. My aunt announced our departure for Moscow; the Prince, therefore, hastens his return to Varsovie and will accompany us.

Though startled by such a beginning, my aunt was very soon pacified by matrimonial allusions; nothing could be more flattering if one is to believe the Princess Tsarwalki; but my advice is to be very wary, very cautious. My aunt proposes writing to M. Darvalin,

one of the secretaries of our embassy at St. Petersburg, for information.

August 25.—We arrived in Moscow this morning about eight o'clock. M. Volgoroski met us at the station, laden with bonbons and flowers. Don Juan was as fresh as on the evening of a ball; a smile on his lips, and a rose in his buttonhole. The "Slavianski Bazar" is remarkable for a great deal of local color—Moscovite dirt. M. Volgoroski has spent at least a hundred francs in presents—bouquets, Russian cakes, carriages, etc. Moscow is a charming town, entirely Asiatic; the houses and public buildings are painted several different colors, and shine like jewels; the Moscovites hide, beneath their wonderful rags, the worst type in all Europe.

Oh! the never-to-be-forgotten sight of the Kremlin! M. Volgoroski took us to the Moskova bridge, so that we could have a view of the entire building. I shall always remember it. An eastern sun shed its dazzling light most profusely, and the most sombre objects burned with a thousand fires; this intense glare makes one giddy. Opposite us, separated by the Moskova, was the Kremlin—red walls, gaping embrasures, huge towers with green gables, the barbaric but unique harmony of a pile of buildings and of a medley of colors, azure domes, silver crosses, the rose-colored palace, and white churches, whose golden cupolas look like suns fallen from the heavens.

August 27.—Really Moscow is too dirty; we leave to-morrow, still accompanied by our cavalier. My aunt has received a most satisfactory letter from M. Darvalin; fortune solid as a rock, irreproachable conduct, aristocratic old family, a staunch Catholic, and a patriotic Pole. The Prince has redoubled his attentions; all the flowers of rhetoric are used in conversation, and for decoration the phantasmagoria of Eastern Russia is brought into play. Yesterday and to-day we visited the Kremlin.

August 29.—Twenty-six hours of travel! Still thirty-one before Vienna is reached! My poor head can stand it no longer. The endless stretches to be crossed, with nothing to break the monotony of the view and shorten

the distance, the gloomy aspect of the sky, all make the journey doubly long. Occasionally the steppes give place to cultivated ground, but these mown fields, these miserable hovels, instead of farmhouses, sadden one still more. Since entering Poland the plain is covered with little hillocks, like gigantic mole-hills; the country bristles with tall crosses. Maurice is ill, so we shall pass Varsovie without stopping, rest three days in Vienna, and then go to the Tyrol to recuperate. Fifty-six hours of railroad travel for a sick child seems the reverse of good sense to me. My aunt prefers the sleeper, as there is less jarring than in the other carriages; but I do not agree with her. M. Volgoroski, under pretence of a late summer trip, travels with us to the Tyrol. The Prince commits himself more and more. It seems my aunt has had significant explanations, and I shall soon have the most delightful of uncles. Now is the time to sketch his portrait; thirty years old, with an erect bearing and easy manners; accustomed to society and the world; the military effect of his long mustaches, arched brows, and brown hair, is balanced by the kindness of his blue eyes, and the almost feminine delicacy of his features. Clothes unexceptional in material and cut add still more to his commanding stature, and set off his well-formed hands and feet. As to the mind, he is highly cultivated, intelligent, witty and kind-hearted; and depth—yes, there is depth, I know it instinctively. I desire this marriage with all my heart. I feel that I shall be so happy in M. Volgoroski's home, happy enough to stay there forever, and not to regret my rôle of old maid.

August 30.—I am not mistaken. M. Volgoroski has an excellent heart, an upright mind, and profound Catholic convictions. He seems to me an ideal husband, greatly my aunt's superior it must be confessed.

September 1.—Shall I confide my secret to this tell-tale page? Well! yes, I will speak out. I must, and I have not courage to tell my aunt the mysterious whisperings of my heart. How can I say to her: "Notwithstanding your fortune, your beauty, your grace, the Prince chooses the awkward little school-girl, ugly, an orphan

and poor." And this folly is the truth. I am not ashamed to confess it to this paper, I am happy, so very happy—I admire him, and I wish to be worthy of his love.

Yesterday we visited the curiosities of Vienna. M. Volgoroski—(how differently that name now sounds to my ear)—M. Volgoroski was our cicerone. He took us first to the Prater; the concert-gardens, the beer-gardens, and the refreshment-rooms almost hide themselves among the trees; the cool green of the lawns extends in all directions, and the endless avenue seems to touch the horizon. Further on, the Danube invades the gardens, and from the waters emerge the rough trunks of trees and the smaller branches of the bushes. A ray of sunlight plays across the foliage on the surface of this improvised lake.

We then visited the cathedral, with its marvellous windows, the Emperor's palace, etc. But I forgot it all on the Belvedere terrace. Maurice wished to rejoin Fraulein in the garden, and I offered to take him there.

"No," whispered my aunt; "I do not wish to stay alone with M. Volgoroski. I will go down with Maurice."

So we both remained on the terrace. Before us rose the innumerable brick roofs, overtopped by the cathedral towers, the big green hills of the neighborhood, and in the distance the last range of the Alps.

"This is delightful," I murmured to keep myself in countenance, for without reason this unforeseen tête-à-tête embarrassed me.

"Yes, we will come here again."

I looked at M. Volgoroski; his expression confused me.

"Ah! but monsieur, my aunt never takes the same trip twice."

"But you will not always follow your aunt."

"No, monsieur; but if I marry, I shall follow my husband, and he will be too poor to travel."

"Then you do not wish him to be rich, nor a prince, nor a Pole?"

At these words I felt myself grow pale, everything

swam before my eyes, and I leaned against the balustrade for support.

"Do not agitate yourself. I will speak to your aunt."

"My aunt? You are not in love with her?"

"No; with you."

My aunt returned. M. Volgoroski renewed the interrupted conversation, and I sat trembling in a corner, with eyes fixed on the ground. Last night I did not close my eyes, but was weaving golden pictures of the future, or torturing myself with thoughts of the morrow's explanations.

September 2, six o'clock.—My hand trembles so with emotion I can scarcely hold my pen. Ah! that terrible scene! I am beside myself, and I shall never forget the cruel deception and its results.

M. Volgoroski was announced; my aunt hastened to the next room to receive him, and I was left alone with a palpitating heart. Each moment I expected the door to open, and to hear my aunt call me, and—the rest was lost in a cloud of day-dreams. Suddenly there was a sound of voices, as if in hot dispute.

"No, no," cried my aunt, "I will never consent."

Half distracted, I opened the door and ran to M. Volgoroski. His contracted brow, his eye burning with anger softened at sight of me.

"Your aunt wishes to separate us. But I swear that I will be faithful. Two years from now you will be of age, and at liberty to choose for yourself; if you are constant, I will wait for you."

He looked at me—O, aunt!—kissed my hand, and left the room without looking back. When alone, my aunt fell on the sofa, put her handkerchief to her face, and gave way to hysterical sobs; I called Fraulein, and we carried her to bed. She seemed to suffer terribly in body and mind; she choked, her teeth chattered, her arms were distorted with cramps, her eyes and her whole manner were despairing. The sight wrung my heart, and I fell on my knees beside her.

"Aunt, dear aunt, it is not my fault. Rest assured, I will do as you wish. I will write to M. Volgoroski."

The poor woman turned from me and murmured:

"No, go away, go away, the very sight of you makes me ill. Those eyes, the eyes of her father and Max—they are revenged to-day. You ought to hate me, Cécile, but have pity and try to forgive me. If you see the Prince as I do, you can understand how terribly I feel. I thought him mine—mine for always! I had not the courage to conceal my chagrin—I have refused him your hand."

These words calmed her a little.

"My good, dear aunt, I am grieved to see you in this condition; and I promise you not to speak of him for a long time. It will be a good way to prove his love; if he is faithful, it will be time enough for you to yield then."

"Cécile, I ought not to accept your sacrifice, but I suffer too much."

At this moment Maurice rushed into the room, and threw his arms about his mother.

"Mamma, dear mamma, you will belong only to your little Maurice! you will not give him a papa!"

Had he heard, and had he understood with a child's wonderful intuition?

My aunt pressed the poor little fellow to her heart and wept bitterly. I profited by this interruption to fly to my room—the room which Fraulein shared with me. Fortunately Fraulein had gone for a glass of champagne for her mistress. Champagne was my aunt's great remedy when overcome with emotion.

I fell on my knees, and implored the aid of Providence. My aunt soon slept. Maurice has gone into the hall to play with his balloon, and I have taken up my dear journal.

September 3.—Six hours ago we left Vienna! My heart was almost as full as if it were my country which I was leaving behind me. My *fiancé*—surely I have the right to call him thus in my thoughts—my *fiancé*, also, probably leaves this morning, alas! for Poland. Every hour doubles the distance between us. Ah! I begin to understand all the grandeur of my sacrifice, and to ask myself if I have the strength to complete it. Then I look at my aunt. Poor woman! she, too, loves him. I

say to myself in two years things will not have changed; at once or never. No! I must not give up hope; time is an infallible physician. If my aunt could love another, she would forget our Prince.

I gaze out of the window; the country is gloomy, very gloomy. Those high mountains covered with forests, those lonely valleys, the white road winding beside a little blue river, those rustic hamlets, the farmhouses built half-way up,—these are beautiful, but they do not soothe me. I already know the Tyrol from having spent some holidays there with a friend. At that time and for me, a poor little school-girl of ten, it was an earthly paradise. We took all the excursions about Innsprück with her father and mother. Marguerite, a child not spoiled but adored, found the atmosphere of wise tenderness very natural. Ah! how far distant that time seems! Here is the same Tyrol, and the sight sickens me. It is very sad to recall the days of childish happiness in the despair of later years. My aunt and I seek only the quiet and repose of a country life. Shall we find it at Méran?

September 10.—A week! How long it seems, and still how short! At times I feel as if it were only yesterday we left Vienna. Méran is a picturesque place, but lonely for society people. Fine hotels and pretty villas are filled with invalids and hermits. Ah! if M. Volgoroski had come with us, how I should enjoy this rest! The curious little town, with its odd Italian flavor, is situated in the midst of a narrow valley, sheltered toward the north by high mountains, dark green, slate blue, or brick red, according to the caprices of the sun. Modest hamlets are grouped around brown church steeples; cottages, villas, and ruined manors are scattered over the lower slopes; the mountains are hollowed into narrow channels by the torrents; clouds rest on the bare summits; the beautiful Italian sun plays on the glaciers that lie on the higher slopes. In the morning we gossip before the hotel door, and hunt for bric-a-brac in the depths of dark little shops in the quaint street; in the afternoon there is music on the banks of the Passer, then we climb some picturesque gorge and

drink our tea or coffee at some restaurant noted for its beautiful view; in the evening we go to bed as early as at the Sacred Heart. And I, all day long, I ask myself how I can make my aunt, who is grieving greatly, forget this fatal mistake. My happiness depends upon hers, so I merit nothing for this seeming devotion. Each day to divert her I suggest a walk, a book, a chat with some chance acquaintance stopping at the hotel; but every morning when she wakens, her eyes are red.

September 11.—A letter from him. By good luck the boy brought it directly to me. I shall read it and reread it a thousand times. How it speaks to my heart! So tender, yet so discreet! Its pure perfume soothes my conscience under the weight of this secret. Shall I answer it? I hesitate; and yet I have not the right to refuse such love, so simple a proof of affection and faithfulness. Ask my aunt's advice—folly! Yes, I will write him, but only to explain why I cannot do so hereafter, with a request to continue writing to me, and a promise to inform him of all the serious events in my life. I am so glad to have this letter. I feel so much nearer him!

Another incident marked our afternoon—the meeting with M. de Lestigues, my father's half-brother. He lives in the country, and I scarcely know him. He is a thin man of about forty, poor, and loves solitude. His poverty obliges him to live quietly, and he has grown fond of it. A month's sojourn at a small hotel in Méran drains his holiday purse. He is very reserved with us, no doubt on account of my aunt's wealth.

September 15.—After much hesitation and retouching, my letter has gone. Ah! how I should like to follow it, and see M. Volgoroski's face when he receives it! Two years! Can I live seven hundred and thirty days without seeing him? And to think I may be forgotten! The thought cuts my heart like a sword. But to-day I hope for the best. M. de Lestigues will save me. Yes, notwithstanding the apparent improbability, I trust in him.

His kindness, his solicitude for me, and our relation-

ship, this morning led me to confide in him. I was walking beside the Passer with Fraulein and Maurice. He joined us, and after the usual remarks, he jestingly alluded to my marriage. I looked at him; his sad, kind face showed me he would understand my heart.

"My dear uncle, I will be frank with you. Yes, I have a suitor, not the conventional admirer, but one who loves me and is loved in return. I cannot marry before my majority."

"Your aunt opposes it?"

"Yes, uncle."

"Then the gentleman is poor?" And he smiled bitterly, as if at some remembrance.

"On the contrary, he is a millionaire."

"Ah! that surprises me. Is he old?"

"Scarcely thirty."

"Catholic?"

"A devout one."

"Handsome?"

"Assuredly, and a prince."

"Where did you meet him?"

I told him all our story, omitting, of course, my aunt's share. Nevertheless, I must have said too much, for M. de Lestigues clearly understood it.

"She loves him, child; that is the secret."

Stunned at my involuntary treachery, I vainly tried to undeceive my uncle.

"She loves him, she loves him," he murmured. "Then she is still capable of loving! I lost heart too soon." And, turning to me:

"Keep up your courage; I promise to do everything I can to help you, and you know the old saying: 'To will is to do.'"

Then I had a strange idea. M. de Lestigues intends to help me by winning my aunt's heart. Ah! I wish him success.

September 18.—For two hours we have been on the way to Munich. M. de Lestigues, very much affected, said farewell to us, and promised to call in Paris.

September 19.—Two revelations! Arrived at Munich this morning, we devoted the day to slumber, inter-

spersed with confidential talks. After being subjected to such conflicting emotions, my aunt feels the need of these chats.

"No, Cécile, I never loved my husband. Only his position made me prefer him to another. At twenty I was not romantic."

"Aunt, I am astonished; for your very nature is full of sentiment."

"Yes, poor child, you have been a victim to it. But that will not last long; you will soon marry M. Volgoroski."

I felt myself blush with joy; it was the first time she had mentioned his name since leaving Vienna.

"I conquered one love from selfishness; I will conquer another from love. My dear child, you have a right to all my confidence; I will make my confession to you.

"Your mother and I had small *dots*, scarcely one hundred thousand francs. Accustomed to the luxuries of a home where carriages and gowns consumed almost the entire income, little loved by our parents, we imagined happiness to be linked with a *rivière* of diamonds and a stylish turn-out. We were both pretty and soon had several desirable suitors. Agreeing with me, your mother pitilessly refused them as not being sufficiently wealthy. Suddenly she met your father, fell in love, and married within six months. The marriage was celebrated with great pomp at Paris. I was maid-of-honor, and M. de Lestigues was best man. He was then twenty-two, and became the most devoted of my many admirers. I thoughtlessly encouraged him. But one day he proposed. I shrugged my shoulders. Absurd! One hundred thousand francs on one side, sixty thousand on the other and a place in the navy-office would never support us comfortably. I was not plucky enough to marry under such circumstances. It was a pity; I met M. de Lestigues several times afterward at family reunions; he seemed cold, reserved, indifferent. Shortly after this he went to Touraine, and I married a wealthy speculator. During the engagement I was elated with the purchase of jewels, furniture, horses,

carriages, gowns, and preparations for the wedding. But after the novelty had worn off I wearied of my wealth; after three years I was bored. I sought consolation in my child; but dear Maurice was a toy, not a friend. Then I turned to society; the whirl of artificial occupations, of tiresome pleasures, diverted me until I suddenly found myself a widow. Forced to live in retirement, too frivolous to occupy myself with charitable work, I amused myself by reading novels. I lived only in my romances, and gradually became a sentimental dreamer. My heart was empty; it sought some one to worship. Alas! it was then that I met your *fiancé*."

"Aunt, it is my fault; I am so sorry."

"No, dear Cécile, M. Volgoroski does not love me, and I am not worthy of his love."

I leaned my head against her knee and murmured:

"Ah! if you could love another!"

She was not angry, but looked at me affectionately:

"I wish so with all my heart; it would be the simplest remedy."

And then a long silence. It was broken by my aunt.

"So you see, Cécile, I have spoiled my life; I lost all for wealth, and now I may lose that, too."

"What! you, so rich!"

"I am still; but I inherited some poor investments from my husband; my lawyer has tried to save the money, but I fear he will lose it, and I do not know how to help myself."

"Aunt, I know some one who loves you, and who will help you."

"No, all that is ended for me."

Her resolute tone sealed my lips. Though agitated by my discoveries, I picked up my Baedeker and began to read.

September 19, eleven o'clock.—I am still utterly bewildered.

At nine o'clock my aunt received a telegram. She hurriedly opened it, and then sank into a chair. Scarcely a moment had passed when she looked up resolutely and said:

"I must go to Paris, Cécile; find when the first train leaves."

The alteration in her voice, her extreme pallor, betokened something serious; but her cold tones and her instinctive effort to hide the telegram forbade all questions. I obeyed her request; the Paris express left at ten-forty.

"Well, I will start at once. Give me my bag."

"What! after travelling twenty hours, and without a night's rest?"

"I must go. You can explain to Maurice to-morrow —I do not wish to waken him. Here are one hundred francs. I will wire you as soon as I arrive. I hope to return Wednesday or Thursday; if not, I will send you a check for the trip at once. Adieu, my dear; take good care of Maurice, and pray for me."

We embraced, and I came to my room——

September 20.—A forlorn day! gray as the sky! In the afternoon we walked on the drill-ground, Munich's popular Sunday promenade. The colossal statue of Bavaria enchanted Maurice; I thought it monstrous. Round about were many beer-gardens with hundreds of little tables. At five o'clock we returned to the hotel. Maurice, entirely solaced for his mother's absence, was very mischievous until dinner. His teasing turned my thoughts from my one idea—the reasons and the consequences of my aunt's sudden journey. Without doubt it is some money trouble; perhaps ruin. Can she escape the storm, or will she founder?

September 21.—No news from my aunt, notwithstanding that she promised to send me a message. I am very anxious and shall telegraph.

Eight o'clock.—No answer. Oh, this terrible day! I am feverish, my heart throbs, and my head is splitting. I imagine a thousand things, all most improbable. We remained in the hotel the entire afternoon, starting every time the door opened or we heard a step, hoping each moment the porter would bring a telegram. To make time fly I would go to the drawing-room, stay there ten minutes—a century!—then return with beating heart, hardly daring to look at the table; alas!

nothing there! Fraulein adds to my suffering; she cares for nothing beyond finishing her daily task, and making herself perfectly comfortable.

September 22.—A letter from M. Volgoroski! Ah, if he knew how unhappy I am! This dear letter has brought balm to my heart. I am more hopeful; all this trouble may perhaps pave the way to my happiness. At this moment I am terribly agitated. I have telegraphed to the concièrge in the Boulevard Haussmann, and I am waiting for his reply.

September 23.—This morning at five o'clock a message from the concierge: "Madame Gallien not arrived." This news terrifies me; the uncertainty and suspense alarm me. At nine o'clock I received yesterday's bill. I paid it, and see with horror that my purse is almost empty.

September 24.—Alone! quite alone in Munich with a child of seven. Oh! that girl, that Fraulein, the abominable creature! This morning,—it angers me to think of it,—she came to my room:

"Mademoiselle, my month is up to-day; no doubt, madame left you my wages."

"But, fraulein, you are well aware of our situation. I have only eleven francs left; see for yourself."

"Ah! mademoiselle, I imagine madame is ruined. I have always felt a presentiment of this catastrophe. But I am not in a position to work for nothing. So, mademoiselle, I will leave this evening for Paris. It is a good time to find a place."

I was pale with anger and childish fear.

"Very well, go! but you are acting abominably."

She went out, slamming the door. Maurice burst into tears, and I tried to console him.

"My poor little one, we are all alone now, but I will care for you."

Fraulein understood the uselessness of saying farewell; we did not see her again. We passed the day cowering in our room, not even daring to go out.

September 25.—I fear everything, but the most cruel reality would not be so horrible as this suspense. I try to play with Maurice, and stop, suffocated with tears

I want to pray, but strength fails me. I read and re-read my *fiancé's* letters, and begin kissing them as my only consolation.

September 26.—Am I doing wrong to write in a church? Maurice and I have spent the afternoon here; a cold rain is falling, and we have no other shelter. Since yesterday my purse has been completely empty. This morning I was seized with fear of another bill. At seven o'clock, I left the hotel as if going for a walk, but with the determination not to return. Perhaps there is a debtor's prison in Bavaria; in any case I could not endure such disgrace. The daylight fades! Where shall we find a lodging? I will take courage and go to the French consulate; it is my only hope!

September 27.—We are sitting around a big fire awaiting dinner. M. de Lestigues, with my little cousin on his knee, dreams with eyes fixed on the glowing coals. Suddenly a big, ruddy-faced German woman appears in the door-way, carrying an enormous tray; she says in a friendly voice: "Here is some good soup for the little boy and you, mademoiselle; you must eat and forget the bad day."

Ah! if it is the end! God has almost performed a miracle for us; we trust in him! On leaving the church where I had continued my diary, we followed at a venture a big deserted street. I asked a passer-by for the French consulate. I did not understand the answer, and we went on, still at random. At a corner of the street Maurice ran up to a gentleman; the light from a lamp shone on our faces; at the same instant we both cried:

"Cécile!"

"Uncle!"

Yes, it was he; our loneliness, our fears, our misery, all disappeared before this providential protection. Two words explained the situation, and decided my uncle to take us to good Madame Bergelinn, the patriarchial hostess of a small boarding-house. We leave with my uncle for Paris to-morrow. His love for my aunt is shown by his uneasiness about her. Madame Bergelinn enters; dinner is waiting!

September 28.—For three hours we have been reinstated in the Boulevard Haussmann. Maurice, delighted to see his dainty room once more, prattles incessantly. My uncle's kind words and gold pieces calm the panic somewhat: "If madame is ruined, I will pay the wages; you shall lose nothing, I promise you." The concièrge returned to his post, and the maids consented to go on with their work. M. de Lestigues has found my aunt at Mêlun among the victims of an accident, who eight days ago were carried to the town hospital. The wound in her head is healing, and she is out of danger. She will be here in an hour; I have everything ready to receive her. What good care I shall take of her! But the future? I must not think of it; there is too much to fear and hope. A single look into the unknown frightens me.

October 15.—Ah! I am so happy! My life's romance is played! In three weeks I shall marry Prince Volgoroski. On the same day my aunt will become Madame de Lestigues. All these results have come about most naturally.

My aunt recovered very quickly. M. de Lestigues's attentions touched her not a little. Uncle came to inquire for her every morning and evening, and spent the rest of the day trying to save some small portion of her fortune.

One evening, as I returned to the drawing-room after putting Maurice to bed, I heard mysterious whisperings. My aunt was talking in a low tone to M. de Lestigues. Discretion told me to retreat. I slipped away with beating heart. My fate was being decided. The thought made me giddy. I knelt on my *prie-dieu*, my head buried in my hands, my soul as inert as my body. And yet I lived, I saw the door through which my fate would enter. I waited a century—at last—footsteps.

"Cécile."

I rose mechanically. I entered the room. My aunt was standing; my uncle held her hand.

"Cécile," she said, "come and kiss M. de Lestigues. He will now be doubly your uncle."

I gave a cry, one of those joyful cries which are as

heart-rending as cries of sorrow, and threw myself into my savior's arms. Since that day each instant has been marked by some new joy. Uncle wrote to my *fiancé;* the following week M. Volgoroski brought me a most beautiful ring. My aunt in her happiness found nothing disagreeable in their meeting again. My Prince, like a courteous man, has forgotten all.

The days pass like a dream; purchasing my trousseau at the best places; choosing jewels from heaps of diamonds, pearls, rubies, and emeralds; selecting horses, ordering furniture for my residence in Poland; and in the evening, seated on the veranda in the twilight, I listen to a fairy language murmured in my ear. But I am not the only contented person in the house. Dressed in a simple cashmere gown, rising at daybreak, teaching Maurice, learning the details of housekeeping, selling her horses, carriages, furniture, laces and jewels, my aunt carries in the depth of her eyes the same radiant light of happiness that shines in mine. And in her little home in Touraine, she will certainly not envy my lot.

November 6.—For three hours I have been the Princess Volgoroski. I close my journal never to reopen it. Happy people have no history!

Bruno Sperani wrote this wild tale of the Italian mountains, and Eliza Lutley Boucher translated it for ROMANCE.

A MOUNTAIN ROSE.

DRIVING along the high road at the foot of one of the Italian mountains, which divide that glorious land of sunshine and flowers from the more rugged but equally beautiful Switzerland, we remarked the form of a woman rapidly ascending the steep mountain path, her figure tall, erect, and graceful, standing boldly out from the background of dark rocks which surrounded her. On her left arm hung a basket, while her right hand firmly grasped a staff, which she used as an Alpenstock to assist her in the more difficult parts of the ascent. The dangerous path could be traced for some distance, and then became lost in the woods which crowned the lofty peaks of the mountain.

"That is the mad woman carrying food to her lover," remarked the driver, crossing himself in deference to the current superstition that misfortune follows him whose eye lights on a lunatic ascending one of these heights. He added that, owing to the prevalence of this belief, poor Rosa enjoys perfect freedom to go and come as she pleases, unquestioned and unwatched. Peasants, charcoal-burners, shepherds, smugglers, and even the custom-house officers flee from her as from a pestilence. She therefore goes wherever she thinks fit, being perfectly certain that none will dare track her footsteps nor interfere with her actions, whatever curiosity they may feel on the subject of her mysterious wanderings.

But, for all this, everybody knew, or thought they knew, that twice every week Rosa carried a supply of food to the hiding-place of her outlawed lover, the murderer Constantino Valsassina. At the time of his trial, and for a considerable period afterward, the authorities made every effort to capture the notorious

smuggler, but without success, and the fact of his having so long eluded his pursuers was regarded as another demonstration of the truth of the mountain proverb, "Large shoes and fine brains." Valsassina was condemned indeed to ten years' imprisonment, but the sentence, owing to his cleverness in eluding the officers of justice, was never carried into execution. Two years after the condemnation, however, the custom-house officers either invented the story, or perhaps actually believed, that death had delivered the outlaw forever from the hands of justice. The report ran that he had fallen over a precipice during a well-remembered winter tempest, and the mantle of the unfortunate man having been found during the ensuing spring at the bottom of this precipice, near an enormous mass of rock which had fallen during the storm, they came to the conclusion that his body must be lying, crushed to atoms, beneath this immense mass of fallen rock. After that time, therefore, all search for Valsassina was abandoned as useless; but the form of Rosa Manilla was still seen with pathetic constancy ascending the rugged mountain-path with her basket of provisions.

From time to time she mysteriously disappeared for a season, and on returning to her usual haunts, although a smile of unusual happiness illuminated her beautiful features, and a light of ecstasy beamed in her eyes, she was ever silent as the sepulchre with regard to the cause of her mysterious absence.

In vain the women interrogated, and the priest insisted; she would open her heart to neither, and either did not or would not understand the questions addressed to her, replying only by monosyllables or nonsense.

Thus, little by little, all ceased to interrogate her, and at last the custom-house officers, who had suspected her of aiding and abetting the smugglers, ceased their persecutions, having never discovered any solid foundation for their suspicions. They were convinced of her insanity, and naturally concluded that it was not worth while to lose any more time in fruitless investigations. Rosa resided in a small cabin situated at the foot of the mountain, and subsisted on the produce of a garden and

small field, which she cultivated with her own hands, and occupied herself in digging, sowing, and planting, as she had always been accustomed to do in her earlier days.

When she set out on her mysterious excursions, the foosteps of the beautiful Rosa were swift as the wind, and light as those of the mountain deer. If some imprudent person dared follow her, she turned round and transfixed him, as it were, with her eyes. Those bright, phosphorescent orbs seemed to force the unfortunate intruder, in spite of himself, to retrace his steps, as if overcome by some strange occult power, which he found himself utterly incapable of resisting. Then she immediately disappeared into the thick undergrowth of the woods, unheeding the rending of her garments or the tearing of her flesh by the sharp thorns.

. . . . . .

The following history of Rosa Manilla we gleaned from the driver and from others who had known the village beauty from her infancy.

Five years before she had been the most lovely girl of Dosoliro and the surrounding country-side, and the young men of Gravedona spoke with enthusiasm of her matchless beauty. They named her "The Mountain Rose," and even the dreaded custom-house officers fell, one and all, a prey to the charms of the peerless daughter of Manilla the smuggler. But the latter guarded her with the most savage ferocity, giving her this brief counsel: "Amuse yourself as much as you please with these young fools, but beware of seriously encouraging any one of them, more especially one of my own calling; for should you ever become the *fiancée* of a smuggler, the lives of both of you shall pay the forfeit."

All knew from the determined and desperate character of the man that he would keep his word.

As yet Rosa had felt no temptation to disobey the imperious mandate of her father, for the young men of the neighborhood had each and all failed to awaken the slumbering passions of the dark-eyed beauty.

"I care for none of them," she said with a proud in-

difference, not unmingled with contempt. "But if ever I meet with one whom I can truly love, the case will be different. I shall take my destiny in my own hands."

About this time, Constantino Valsassina, a daring smuggler, and famous hunter of the mountains, whose name was well known as a desperado in all the country round, appeared on the scene. He was strong, courageous, and handsome. The hitherto cold and impassive heart of the village beauty was stirred to its depths, and she determined that, come what might, she would wed no other than this one hero, this Napoleon of the forests. What did the bold and young smuggler care for the threats and menaces of Manilla? He resolved that he would win the splendid Rose of the Mountains, and he kept his word.

She was just twenty years of age, and perhaps had tired of the lonely life she had hitherto been compelled to lead, or it may be that her affections, like some marvellous mountain plants, were late in flowering; for never before had Rosa Manilla's heart been stirred by that mysterious passion which men call love. The first time she met the hunter she only blushed deeply, and then turned pale. He noted the sigh, and then ventured one evening at sunset, on returning from the forest, to place a bouquet of mountain flowers on her balcony. Instead of receiving them with indifference or merriment, as was her wont, she raised the sweet-smelling blossoms to her lips and kissed them with a sigh.

From that moment, Valsassino felt he had conquered, and the lovers lost no opportunity of being together, Soon the neighbors began to gossip, and those who had at first pitied the girl, condemned to live a solitary and loveless life, with strange inconsistency now blamed her severely for her disobedience to her father. Her companions, the village maidens, began to experience the pangs of jealousy, for the handsome smuggler had won other hearts besides that of the Mountain Rose; while the men felt wounded because each imagined that in past days she had shown some preference for himself, and hated his victorious rival accordingly. While they had all felt that she could be the bride of none of

them, they had been resigned to their fate; but the sight of the new-comer, the adventurer, winning the prize over their heads, was too great a strain on their generosity of feeling, and at last his daughter's weakness was revealed to the ferocious and vengeful Manilla. At first, he refused to believe the report, for already certain young men, whose advances had been gently but firmly repulsed by the young girl, had endeavored to calumniate her. No, he would not give credit to the idea that his pure and stainless Rosa could be enamored of a desperado, after having refused the offers of so many respectable young men, any one of whom would have made her a good and suitable husband. He either could not or would not entertain such an unlikely and humiliating idea. Once he mentioned the subject to his daughter, who laughed merrily at the tale, and both then turned the whole affair into jest and ridicule.

But one evening when Manilla passed the border with his smuggler's sack on his shoulders, the guard, who had hitherto (thanks to the charms of his daughter) feigned not to perceive him, fired at once, and was near wounding the old man. The ball pierced the bag, but hastily throwing down his burden, he luckily had time to escape. But what an awakening from his false dream of security! He doubted no more the tale of his daughter's disobedience, but with his habitual caution, he kept his own counsel, breathing not a word of his suspicions to Rosa, for he wished to ascertain the bitter truth for himself, determined that when he had done so, his vengeance should be swift and certain.

The two lovers, entirely engrossed by their passion, had gradually relaxed their habit of watchfulness, and having been so far fortunate in lulling the old man's suspicions, had become somewhat imprudent and careless. To surprise them in one of their stolen interviews was therefore an easy task for the wily old smuggler. He informed his daughter that he should be absent on business for three days, and then craftily returned in the middle of the first evening of his pretended absence. Rosa and Valsassina were supping happily together, although from long habit the latter still

kept his loaded weapon by his side. When they least expected it, a knock was heard at the door.

"Ah!" cried Rosa, seized by an overpowering sense of impending misfortune, "it is my father!"

"Open, Rosa!" cried the old man, "open immediately. I am hotly pursued by the officers!"

Rosa at the same time was supplicating her lover to hide himself. This he at first refused to do, but at length, yielding to her entreaties, he retired to her bedroom and closed the door.

"At last," cried the enraged father as he entered the house, and looked around him. Then he added, in a tone of fury, "Where have you hidden him?"

"Hidden whom? In the fiend's name, what do you mean?" replied Rosa, striving as usual to laugh the matter off, though she grew as pale as death.

"Ah! you think to deceive me, do you! You will see—for if you love him, now is the time to utter a prayer for his soul." Quickly approaching the door of the chamber, he burst it open with one blow. But the hunter was prepared for him. Two shots were exchanged almost simultaneously, and with a fearful oath Manilla fell dead at the feet of his young antagonist.

And thus it was that the courageous and devoted lover of the beautiful Rosa became the murderer of her father, while the terrible shock had such a fearful effect upon the sensitive soul of the daughter that reason tottered on its throne, and the maniac we had watched scaling the dizzy heights was no other than the sweet Mountain Rose, whose tragic fate had been caused by the selfishness of her father and the cruel malignity and jealousy of the people among whom her lot was cast.

Nevertheless, as I looked on the soft eyes and pale, intelligent face of this humble heroine of the mountains, I could not help asking myself the questions, "Is Rosa Manilla indeed bereft of reason, or is her supposed madness only assumed for a purpose? Is it certain, beyond the possibility of doubt, that her outlawed lover indeed lies crushed beneath the rocks at the foot of the precipice? Is it the madness of love which leads that

poor creature up those giddy heights, and strengthens that slight form to endure those almost superhuman toils? Or is it a true, heroic love which thus enables her to brave every danger and to endure obloquy and disgrace for the sake of that one beloved object?"

But if the hypothesis of the death of Valsassina be a false one, and her madness only assumed, how could he possibly exist on those mountains, or in those forests, during the frost and snow, and amid the fearful tempests of winter, without being obliged to descend into the valleys, and thus expose himself to the danger of discovery by the officers of justice? But was it indeed necessary that he should return to the Italian territory? Could he not descend on the other side, and under an assumed name dwell unknown in some remote village of "La belle Suisse"?

This was certainly not impossible. The peasantry of those parts are unscrupulous, and Valsassina would naturally find many accomplices and protectors among them, and would certainly prefer a country of smugglers who delighted like himself in evading the law. An abode therefore in this well-known region would offer a more secure refuge for such a character than the great and well-guarded routes to England and America.

These and similar considerations arose spontaneously in my mind, but the driver and other tellers of the story only shook their heads and laughed. For them Rosa Manilla continued to be the mad woman of the mountains, and her lover a crushed form long buried beneath the rocks.

. . . . . .

That same winter such enormous quantities of snow fell from the mountains that the whole region greatly suffered, and many fatal disasters occurred. Among the latter, the cottage of Rosa Manilla was buried beneath a falling avalanche. It was generally supposed that she was absent from home at the time of the catastrophe. But when the snow was at length removed, and the mystery solved, *two* bodies were discovered beneath the ruins, that of the poor girl and that of a man still young, whom she held in a last passionate

embrace. The great majority of the peasants recognized him as a lame musician who wandered about the country with his organ, but some of them swore that the face of the dead man was no other than that of the bold smuggler Constantino Valsassina, the handsome lover of the Mountain Rose.

But the majority were so loud in their assertions that the few were silenced, so the latter wisely held their peace and smiled; and soon Rosa Manilla, even as she lay in the marble beauty of death, was again insulted and despised for the second love they attributed to her. Happily she had passed to that land where the "wicked cease from troubling," and the strife of tongues could wound her brave spirit no more.

The horror and degradation of a career of debauchery are strongly portrayed in the story of "Old Jones." It first appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine*.

OLD JONES.

THE windows at the rear of Acton Chase, an old house in Worcestershire, look out on a quaint bowling green, flanked by yew hedges and backed by a stream of good size, on the further side of which a sparsely-timbered slope leads up to the home farm, and to half-a-dozen farms besides, which once formed the Chase. Zigzag up this slope runs a track—probably it has so run for centuries, for at the foot of it is a ford, which in spring is almost invisible, but in autumn is brown and rutty. The Chase has long been a Roman Catholic house, and up this track dead-and-gone squires, debarred from much converse with their neighbors, have gone to hunt mornings innumerable; so that even to-day people sitting in the garden toward evening are constantly seeing them come trailing home, their horses jaded and themselves calling for the black-jack.

Our story, however, is not of these, but of two men who strolled down this path on an evening no further back than last August. They seemed, outwardly at least, ill matched. The one, a young fellow under thirty, fair-haired and pink-cheeked, and somewhat prim-looking, was of middle size. He was dressed as a clergyman—more neatly and trimly, perhaps, than the average country clergyman dresses. The other was probably the tallest and thinnest man ever seen outside a show—a man whose very clothes, his worn jacket, and shrunken knickerbockers, seemed to share his attenuation. He looked like a game-keeper, but was, in fact, the Squire's son-in-law, Long Jim Foley.

"I really cannot make you out," he said, as the two sighted the house; and, shifting his gun to the other shoulder, he took occasion to glance comically at his

companion. "What do you do, old boy? You never kill anything, unless it is a trout now and then. Now, I could not live without killing. Must kill something every day!"

"And do you?"

"Seldom miss," rejoined the long man cheerfully, "except on a hunting-day when we draw blank. Rats, rabbits, otters, pike, sometimes a hawk, sometimes, as to-day, a brace of wood-pigeons. And game and foxes in their season. Must kill something, my boy."

His companion glanced at him askance, looked away again and sighed.

"I say, what is that for?" Foley continued in the tone of an aggrieved man.

"I was only thinking," replied the other dryly, "what a lucky fellow you were to have nothing to do but kill, Foley. That is all."

The tall man whistled. "I say," said he, "for a man who is going to be married in a week or so, you are in roaring spirits, ain't you? I tell you what it is, my boy, you do not take very kindly to your bliss. I can see Patty flitting about in the garden like a big white moth, waiting, I have no doubt, for a word with your Reverence; and your step lags and your face is grave and you incline to be cynical! What is up?"

The younger man laughed, but not very merrily; and there was a touch of sullenness in his tone as he answered, "Nothing! A man cannot be always grinning."

"No; but *pâté de foie gras* is not man's ordinary meat," retorted Jim, imperturbably. "Jones!"

"Well?" said the other snappishly.

"You are in a mess, my boy—that is my opinion! Now don't take this amiss," Jim continued with dry patience. "I am within my rights. I am one of the family, and if the Squire is blind and Patty is inexperienced, I am neither. And I am not going to let this go on until I know more, my boy. You have some tie or other which weighs on your mind and of which they are ignorant."

The young clergyman turned his face to his companion, and Jim Foley, albeit a very cool personage, was

taken aback by the change which anger or some other emotion had worked in it. Even the clergyman's voice was altered. "And what if I have?" he said hoarsely, stopping short so suddenly that the two confronted one another. "What if I have, Mr. Foley?"

Jim deliberately shut his eyes and opened them again, to make sure that the tragic spirit, so suddenly interposed between him and the pleasant landscape, with its long shadows and distant forge-note, was no delusion. Satisfied, he rose to the occasion. "This," he said, outwardly unmoved. "You must break it—get rid of it. That is all, Jones."

"And if I cannot?"

"Will not, you mean."

"No, cannot, cannot!" replied the clergyman with vehemence.

"Then," Jim drawled—"I am not a moral man, don't mistake me for a moment, but I belong to the family—your Majesty must go elsewhere for a wife! And a little late to do so!" he continued, a hard ring in his tone. "What! you are not coming to the house?"

"No!" cried the other violently. And without more, without a word of farewell, he turned his back and strode away through the lush grass to a point a little higher up the stream, where a plank bridge gave access to the Chase outbuildings, and through them to the village.

Foley stood a while looking after him. "Well," he said at last, speaking gently, as if rallying himself on some weakness, "I am afraid—I really am afraid that I am a little astonished. I should know men by now, and yet I did think that, if any one could show a clean bill of health, it was the vicar. He is smug, he is almost a prig. The old women swear by him, and the young ones dote on him. They say he is on foot morning till night, and not one blank day in a fortnight! And now —whew! I wonder whether I ought to have knocked him down. Poor little Patty! There is not a better girl in the county—except the Partridge!"

He looked down almost pathetically at the gardens below him, but, seeing that the chimneys of the house

were smoking briskly, bethought him of dinner and strode down to the gate with his usual air of perfect *insouciance*.

Meanwhile, the young clergyman gained the side avenue and walked on rapidly toward the village, his eye dazzled by the low beams of the sun, which shone directly in his face, and his mind confounded by the tumult of his own thoughts. A crisis which he had long foreseen and dreaded, and as often postponed, was now imminent, the power to control it gone from his hands. He looked on the past with bitter regret, and forward with shame as great. That which had once been feasible—nay, as it seemed to him now, almost easy—time and he had rendered impossible. He stood aghast at his own feebleness, not considering that the routine of parish work and the satisfaction accruing from small duties done—the doing of which had, after all, been no self-sacrifice, no effort—had weakened his moral fibre, even as the peacefulness of the life about him, and the transparent truthfulness of those with whom his lot was cast, had made the task of disclosure more formidable. He had fallen—no, he had not fallen, but he had put off the act which honor demanded so long that, though the day of grace was still with him, there could be no grace in the doing of it.

The rooks, streaming homeward in some order of their own, were cawing overhead as he opened the gate and entered the vicarage garden, where the great hollyhocks stood in rows, and the peaches, catching the last rays of the sun aslant, were glowing against the southern gable. To the stranger—to the American, in particular—who looked in as he passed, it seemed a paradise, that vicarage garden. But—for peaches are not peace, nor hollyhocks either—its owner passed through it with compressed lips and cheeks still tingling. He entered the porch, where one or two packing-cases told of coming changes, and then stood irresolute in the cool, silent hall, remembering that he had intended to dine at the Chase, and that probably there was nothing prepared for him here. Not that he had any appetite, but dinner was a decent observance, and it seemed to

him just then that not to dine at all would be to lose his hold on his present life and fall into unknown abysses before his time.

It is well, when we are badly off, to consider how much worse off a minute, a few seconds, may see us. A faint sound at his elbow caused him to turn toward the dining-room. The door was ajar, and through the opening a face was looking out at him. The young vicar did not start, but he drew a deep breath and seemed to stiffen as he gazed. A minute, and his lips —while the other face, with a shifty smile, half mockery, half shame, returned his look—formed the word, "Father!"

It was not audible two paces away, but as it fell, the clergyman glanced round with a stealthy gesture of alarm, and at a single stride was in the dining-room and had shut the door behind him. The other man—a shambling, bent creature, gray-haired and blear-eyed and unwashed, with a beard of a week's growth on his chin—fell back to the table and leaned against it. His rusty black clothes and his boots, broken and dusty, seemed to partake of, rather than to impart, the look of decay and misery which marked his person. The vicar, with his back against the door, looked at him and shuddered, and then looked again, his face hard and his eyes gloomy. "Well?" he said, in a low, stern voice, "what is the meaning of this? What do you do here? You know our agreement. Why have you broken it, Sir?"

The old man pursed up his lips, and, with his head on one side, contemplated his questioner in silence. Then he said suddenly, "Blow the agreement!"

The vicar winced as if he had been struck, but he found words again.

"If you can do without the money," he said, "so much the better; but——"

"Blow the money!" cried the old man, with the same violence. Notwithstanding his words, he seemed to stand in awe of his son, and to be trying to gain courage by working himself into a passion. "What is money?" he continued. "I want no money! I am coming to live with you. Oh, yes, you are going to be

married. I heard of it, though you kept it close, my boy. I heard of it, and I said to myself, 'Good; I will go and live with my boy, and his wife shall take care of my little comforts.'"

The younger man shivered. He thought of Patty, and he looked at the old man before him, sly, vicious, gin-sodden—and his father! "You do not want to live with me," he answered coldly. "You could not bear to live with me for a week, and you know it well. Will you tell me what you do want, and why you have left Glasgow?"

"To congratulate you!" the father answered, with a drunken chuckle. "Walter Jones and Patty Stanton—third time of asking, you know! Oh, I heard of it! But not through you. Why," he continued, with a sudden change to ferocity, "would you not ask your own father to your wedding, you ungrateful boy?"

"No," replied the vicar, sternly and almost loudly, "he being such as he is, I would not."

"Oh, you are ashamed of him, are you? You have kept him dark, have you?" replied the old man, grinning with wicked enjoyment as he saw how his son winced at each sentence, how the color went and came on his cheek. "Well, now you will have the pleasure of introducing me to the Squire, and to daughter Patty, and all your friends. It will be a pleasant surprise for them. I dare say you said I was dead."

"I have not said you were dead."

"Don't you wish I was?"

"God keep me from it!" the vicar moaned.

On that, silently the two men stood looking at each other, the one so neat, clean-shaven, conventional; the other vile with the degradation of drink. Though the windows stood open, the room was full of the smell of spirits, and seemed somehow itself soiled and degraded. Suddenly the younger man sat down at the table and, burying his face between his hands, fell into a storm of weeping.

His father shifted his feet, and, licking his lips nervously, looked at him in maudlin shame, and then from him to the sideboard, in search of his supporter under

all trials. But the sideboard was bare, the doors closed, the key invisible. Mr. Jones grew indignant. "There, stop that foolery!" he said brutally. "You make me sick."

The rough adjuration restored the young man's nerve, and in a minute he looked up, his cheeks wet with tears that were not altogether unmanly, for this tragedy with which he was brought face to face was one not to be got rid of by manliness, or, indeed, by any help of men. "Tell me what it is you want," he said wearily.

"More money," his father snarled. The liquor with which he had primed himself was losing its effect. "I cannot live on what you give me. Glasgow is a dear place. The money ought all to be mine."

"You have had two hundred a year—one-half of my private means."

"I know. I want three now."

"Well, you cannot have it," said the son, languidly. "If you must know, I have agreed to settle one-half my income on my wife at once, and the other half at your death. Therefore it will not be in my power to allow you any more. You have spent a fortune of your own, and you have no claim on my mother's money."

"Very well," Mr. Jones answered, his head and hands trembling with rage and weakness. "Then I stay with you. I stay here. Your father-in-law that is to be will be glad to meet his old friend again, I have no doubt. We were at college together. I dare say he will acknowledge me, if my own son is too proud to do so. I shall stay here until I am tired of the country."

The young man looked at him in dumb despair. Supplication or argument he knew would avail him nothing, and the only threat he could use—that he would stop his father's allowance altogether—would have no terrors, for he could not execute it. To let his father go to the workhouse would be to increase the scandal a hundred times. He got up at last and went out. His housekeeper had come in, and he had told her, keeping his burning face averted the while, to prepare a bed and get supper for two. He shrank—he whose life in Acton had been so full of propriety and

convention—from saying who his guest was. Let his father proclaim himself if he would; even so it would be less painful. The truth must out. Once before, at his first curacy, the young man, younger then and more hopeful, had tried the work of reformation. He had brought his father home to him and done what he could. And the end had been hot, flaming shame and an exposure which had driven him to the other end of England.

When he went out next morning, though his mind was made up to go to the Squire at once and tell him all, he lingered on the white, dusty road and again under the limes outside the lodge. As he stood, the sunlight fell about him in dazzling checkers. Save for the humming of the bees overhead and the whirr of a reaping machine in a neighboring field, the stillness of the August noon hung with the haze over the landscape. His eyes, despite his resolution, filled with angry tears, as he looked round and contrasted the peacefulness of nature with the tumult of shame and excitement in his own breast. There was the school that he opened with prayers four times a week. Between the trees he caught a gray glimpse of the church—his church. As he looked, his secret grew fouler, more formidable.

He turned, with a huge effort, to enter the gates, and saw Patty and her sister, Mrs. Foley, coming down the avenue toward him. They were yet a long way off, their light Summer frocks and parasols flitting from sunlight to shadow, and shadow to sunlight, as they advanced. The young man halted. Had Patty been alone, he would have gone to her and told her all, and surely, surely, though he doubted it himself at this moment, won comfort—for love laughs at vicarious shame. But the Partridge's presence frightened him. Mrs. Foley, round and small and plump as she was, and in all things the antithesis of her husband, had yet imbibed something, if the expression may be used, of Jim's dryness. The vicar feared her under the present circumstances, and turned and fled down the road. He would let them pass—probably they were going to the vicarage—and would then slip up and see the Squire.

He was right in supposing that they were going to the vicarage. Their purpose was to inquire after him; and presently, as they went in that direction, they came upon a strange, dissolute old man whom they eyed with wondering abhorrence, and to whom they gave a wide berth as they passed. They had not gone by him long, before a third person came through the lodge-gates and slowly sauntered after them. This was Jim Foley, come out, with his hands in his pockets and a one-eyed terrier at his heels, to smoke his morning pipe. He, too, espied the old drunkard, and at sight of him took his pipe from his mouth and stood still in the middle of the road, an expression of immense surprise on his features, while Mr. Jones, becoming aware of him rather late—for his faculties were not of the sharpest in the morning—also stood still by some instinct, and looked with dull apprehension and a growing sense of unpleasant recognition at his lanky figure.

"Hullo!" said Jim. Mr. Jones did not answer, but stood blinking in the sunshine. He looked more bleareyed and shabby, more hopelessly gone to seed, if that were possible, than he had looked in the vicarage dining-room.

"Hullo!" said Foley again. "My old friend Wilkins, I think!"

"My name is Jones," the wretched man muttered.

"Ah, Jones, is it? Jones, vice Wilkins, resigned," Jim replied, with ironical politeness. "Come down to Acton upon a little matter of business, I suppose. Now look here, Jones, vice Wilkins," he continued, pointing each sentence with a wave of his pipe, "I see your game. You have come down here to get a ten-pound note, or whatever it may be, from me, by threatening to tell the Squire some old story or other of my turf-days. That is it, is it not?"

Mr. Jones opened his mouth to deny the charge, but thought better of it; either because of the settled skepticism which Foley's face expressed, or because he saw a ten-pound note looming in the immediate future. He remained silent.

"Just so," Foley went on with a nod, replacing his

pipe in his mouth, and his hand in his pocket. "Well, it won't do. It won't do—do you understand? Because, do you see, old boy, you have not accounted for the last pony I sent to you to put on Paradox for the Two Thousand. And I will just trouble you for it and three to the back of it. Three to one was the starting price, I think, Mr. Jones."

Mr. Jones's face fell abruptly, and he glared at his tormentor. "It never reached me," he muttered huskily.

"You mean that you are not going to refund it," said Jim. "Well, you do not look as if you had got it. But I will tell you what you will do. You will go back whence you came within three hours—there is a train at 2:40, and you will go by it. You have caught a Tartar, do you see?" Jim continued sternly; "and though you may, if you stay, give me an unpleasant hour with the Squire, I shall give you a much more unpleasant hour with the policeman."

"But the Squire—" the old man began, "the Squire—"

"No, the policeman!" Foley retorted sharply. "Never mind the Squire. Keep your mind steadily on the policeman and you will be the more certain to catch the train. Now, mind," Jim added, pausing to say another word after he had already turned away, "I am serious, my man. If I find you here after the 2:40 train has left, I give you in charge, and we will both take the consequences."

Jim strolled on then toward the vicarage, congratulating himself on his presence of mind and chuckling over the skill with which he had foiled this attempt on his pocket, while Mr. Jones, though his appetite for a country walk was probably spoiled by the meeting, tottered onward, too, in the opposite direction, rather than seem, by turning at once, to be dogging his late companion, who had inspired him with a very genuine terror. The consequence was that the next turn in the road brought the old man face to face with his son.

"Walter, I am going back," he said, quavering piteously. The interview had shaken him. He seemed less offensive, less of a blot on the landscape; on the other hand, more broken and older. It is not without a

sharp pang that the man who has once been a gentleman finds himself threatened with the handcuffs and forced to avoid the policeman.

The vicar had been for passing him in silence, but these unexpected words brought him to a standstill. What if his father should indeed go? To explain him in his absence seemed now an easy, almost a normal task. Yet he feared a trap, and he only answered, "I am glad to hear it."

"I am going by the 2:40 train," the old man whined. "But I must have a sovereign to pay my fare, Walter."

"You shall have it," said the vicar, his heart bounding.

"Give it me now—give it me now!" his father repeated eagerly. "I tell you I am going by the 2:40. Do you think I am a liar?"

Reluctantly—not because he grudged the money, but because he feared that, the coins once obtained, his father would indeed prove a liar—the young clergyman took out two pounds and handed them to him. The old man gripped them with avidity, and, thrusting them and his hand into his pocket, turned his back on the donor and hobbled away, mumbling to himself.

The vicar remained where he was, standing irresolute just at the turn of the road, which brought the lodge gates into view. Looking at his watch, he found it was 12:15 o'clock. He wondered what Patty was thinking of him and his sudden, strange avoidance of her. And what his housekeeper was thinking of his miserable guest, and whether many people had observed him. The drowsy stillness of a hot Summer day brooded over road and fields, and he felt himself suddenly homeless in the familiar scene. He should have been moving to and fro about his business; instead, he was here hovering stealthily upon the outskirts of the village, dreading men's eyes and prepared to fly from the first comer. By going straight to the Squire he might put an end to this intolerable position, but the temptation to postpone his explanation until his father should have left, overcame him, and he turned and walked steadily away from the village.

He long remembered that miserable tramp in the heat and dust. Throughout it he was weighed down by a feeling that he was an outcast and that the people who met him looked strangely at him, and that while he so roamed aimlessly, his duty called him home. Presently his soul was vexed by a new fear—that his father would not keep his word, and his own dreadful position would be prolonged—the consequence of which was that half-an-hour before the train started he was lurking about the tiny fir plantation at the back of the station-house, peeping at the platform, which lay grilling in the sunshine, and tormenting himself with the suspicion that his watch was wrong.

But presently the station woke up. One or two people arrived, and sat on a barrow in a shady place. The station-master labelled a hamper and gave out a ticket. And then some one else who was by no means welcome to the vicar appeared—Jim Foley. He did not enter the station, but the vicar, uneasily peeping, was taken aback at the sight of him standing on the bridge which carried the road over the railway. What was more, Jim Foley at the same moment discovered him, and visibly started.

Jim looked elsewhere at once, but he had his suspicions. "So, so," he muttered. "Friend Jones grows more of a riddle than ever. I suppose he has had dealings with Master Wilkins too, and has an equal interest with me in seeing him off. I hope he has got rid of him as cheaply! But it is odd! He always seemed mild enough. I shall tell the Partridge, and hear what she says. She likes him."

He forgot, however, all about his wife a few minutes later, when the train had steamed slowly in, and stood, and steamed out again, and the two people who had come by it had passed him where he stood, and even the vicar slowly, and perforce—for this was the only way home—had crawled up to him on the bridge. He had found something else to consider by that time. "I say," he exclaimed on the impulse of the moment, meeting the clergyman open-mouthed, "this will not do, you know."

Jones was dazed, struck down, and prostrated by his heavy disappointment. "What," he said feebly—"what will not do?"

"He has not gone!" Foley protested indignantly.

"No!"

"The old buffer! I guessed what was up as soon as I saw you hanging about. Did he get anything out of you?"

The question seemed brutal, but the clergyman answered it. "Yes," he said, his cheek dark with shame, while he looked down at the end of his stick and wondered dully how the other had found it all out. "Two sovereigns."

"By Jove! Well, what is to be done now—that is the question?"

"I shall go to the Squire," Jones said mechanically.

"What? And tell him this?"

"Yes."

Jim shrugged his shoulders. "Well," he said, after a pause in which he tried to calculate the extent to which this course might commit himself, "I dare say it is the best thing you can do. You will not wait and see if the old fellow goes by the six-ten?"

"No."

"Right; it is your own lookout," said the tall man rather grudgingly. "And while you are telling other things, perhaps you may as well throw this in—not that I care a jot for it. Make it straight for Patty if you can, my friend—and I am with you."

Jim strolled away toward the Acton Arms, after making this handsome concession, very much puzzled in his mind by the new light which events were shedding on the character of Jones. The mere discovery that his future brother-in-law had done a little betting in old days would not have surprised him much. But that, taken in conjunction with the entanglement to which, as he fancied, the vicar had owned the day before, did seem to testify to a character so different from that of the model of propriety he had hitherto known, that he—well, his mind dwelt upon it. "And he never kills a thing," Jim thought, turning it over and over

fruitlessly. "You would not have thought that he knew what sport meant!"

The village policeman was loitering outside the inn, and Foley, who, like most men of his class bred in the country, had a word for every one, stopped to speak to him, and finally bade him come in and have a glass of ale. The road in front of the Acton Arms is separated from the Chase only by a sunk fence, and Jim, casting a glance behind him as he entered, could see not only the windows of the great house flashing in the sunlight, but the vicar pounding along the avenue toward them. He went in, the constable at his heels, and turned at once into the cool, fireless taproom, which for a moment he took to be empty. His first noisy summons, however, undeceived him, for his stick had scarcely rung on the oak table before a man who had been sitting unseen on the settle, his head on his hands, and his senses lost in a drunken stupor, leaped up and, supporting himself by the table, glared at the two intruders.

"Ah!" said the Squire's son-in-law dryly, "so you are here, Master Jones, vice Wilkins, are you? I might have known where to find you!"

It is probable that the wretched man, recognizing him, and seeing the policeman with him, thought that they had come to arrest him. The wholesome terror with which Foley had inspired him in the morning worked in him now. Roused thus abruptly from his tipsy slumbers, bewildered and drink-sodden as he was, he saw in a flash the hand of the law stretched out to grasp him at last, and an old and ungovernable terror seized upon his shattered nerves. "Keep off! keep off!" he gasped, clawing at them with his trembling hands. "You shall not take me! I will not be taken! Don't you see I am a gentleman?"—the last in a feeble scream.

"Easy, easy, old fellow," Jim said, surprised at his violence—"or you will be doing yourself a mischief."

But the words only confirmed the poor wretch in his mistake. "I won't be taken!" he cried, waving them off. "My son will pay you. I tell you," he cried, his voice rising in a shriek which rang shrilly even on the

road outside, and startled the house-dog sleeping in the dust and sunshine—"I tell you my son will pay you!" One of his hands as he spoke overturned the empty glass before him and it rolled off the table—on such trifles life rests. The policeman instinctively started forward to catch it. The old man misunderstood the movement and fell in a fit on the floor.

Instantly there was a great commotion. The inn was roused from its afternoon slumber, and the policeman dispatched for the doctor, and with one thing and another half-an-hour or more elapsed before Foley left the house and slowly made his way to the Chase, thinking a great deal more seriously than was his wont. As hard as nails, some of his friends called him; but there is a very soft spot in these men who are as hard as nails if one can only find it. Approaching the house, he caught sight of his sister-in-law, and shrugged his shoulders and shook himself as if to get rid of unpleasant thoughts. Patty was a great favorite with him and seeing her loitering idly round the sweep before the house, he guessed that she was waiting to intercept her betrothed and learn the cause of the vicar's strange avoidance of her. Jim said a naughty word under his breath, and with the current of his ideas completely diverted went to her as if he had something to say. But reaching her, he listened instead, as a man must when a woman has a mind to speak.

"What is it, Jim?" she broke out. Poor Patty's brown eyes were full of trouble, and her usually pale complexion was just a shade paler. "What is the matter with Walter? He did not dine here last night, though he promised to do so. And when we went to learn the reason this morning, he was out. He was still away at luncheon time, and the school had never been visited. And now, when he came here at last, he told Robert not to call me, but said he would wait in papa's study until he came in."

She stopped breathless. "He is here now?" Jim asked.

"Yes, papa has just come in, and they are in the bowling green."

"I will go to them," he volunteered. There was a rather ugly expression on his plain features.

"But, Jim, what is it?" she repeated, speaking with a little quaver in her voice; and, laying her hand on his arm, she detained him. "Tell me, is there anything the matter?"

Jim looked down at her. She was one of those soft, plump, feminine women who seem made to be protected—whom to hurt seems as wicked as wantonly to harm a child. "The matter?" he said. "Nothing that I know of. What should be the matter? But I will go and see them."

He escaped from her and, entering the hall, of which both the front and back doors were open, found that she was right. The young vicar, the dust still on his shoes and an unwonted shade of ill luck and depression darkening his person, was walking up and down the sward with the Squire—a little man as choleric as he was kind-hearted, who passed two-thirds of his waking hours in breeches and gaiters. Jim Foley strode toward them, a distinct purpose in his mind. These lanky men, commonly so cool and dry, can be very nasty when anything moves them. The vicar, but just embarked on his confession, found it ruthlessly broken in upon and interrupted—made a thousand times more difficult.

"Jones has come to explain matters to you, I hope, Sir," Jim said, his voice as harsh as his face.

The clergyman winced. "He has come to turn my brain, I think," said the Squire, angry and suspicious. "I cannot make out what he would be at."

"I was telling you, Sir," the vicar answered, with some impatience—he could not refrain from that slight show of wounded pride—"that my father——"

"You had better leave your father alone, I think!" Foley struck in, with a manner like the snapping of a trap. "And just explain to Mr. Stanton the little matter you mentioned to me yesterday."

"I was explaining it," rejoined the clergyman in a chill heat. "I was saying that my father—he was at school with you, Sir, you remember?"

"To be sure," said the Squire, his little gray whiskers curling with impatience as he looked from one to the other. "And at college."

"He lost money, in later years, after my mother's death," the young man continued, "and went at last to live in Glasgow." In his dreadful shrinking from the disclosure he had to make his voice took a rambling tone as he added: "I think I told you that, Sir."

"To be sure! To be sure! Twice, I think."

"But I did not tell you," the clergyman replied, driving his stick into the ground and working it about there, while his face grew scarlet—"and I take great shame to myself that I did not, Mr. Stanton, that my father was much——"

"Good heavens, Jones!" Jim broke out at this, his patience exhausted. "What on earth has your father to do with it? You gave me to understand yesterday that you had some entanglement which weighed on your mind. And I thought that you had come here to make a clean breast of that and everything. Instead of which—for heaven's sake, man, don't make me think that you are not running straight!"

The vicar glared at him, while the Squire gazed at both in wonder. "But that old man," Jones said at last, almost at choking point by this time, "whom you saw this afternoon was——"

Jim struck in again savagely. "We do not want to know anything about him either. As for him, he is——"

"My father!"

"He is dead," Jim persisted, raising his hand for silence, and determined to keep his man to the point and to have things straightened out. "We do not want to hear anything about him. We want——"

"Who is dead?"

The question was the vicar's. He wheeled round as he put it, his face white, his voice changed. The Squire, who, like most listeners, had learned more than the talkers, saw his tremendous agitation, and, grasping some idea of the truth, tried to intercept Foley's answer. But he was too late. "The poor old fellow we

went to see off," Jim said, almost lightly. "He is dead. Died in a fit half-an-hour ago, I tell you."

"Dead?"

"Yes, dead. At least, the doctor says so."

The vicar put his hands suddenly to his face and turned away, his back shaking. The others looked at him. "He was—he was my father!" he murmured—softly, almost under his breath. And even Jim, his eyes as wide as saucers, understood now.

"Fetch some wine, you fool!" muttered the Squire, giving him a nudge. And he put his arm around the clergyman and led him gently to a seat in the shade. There, I think, Walter Jones prayed that he might not be thankful. Man is weak. Conventional man is very weak.

"Once a gentleman always a gentleman," was the Squire's motto. There was no attempt at concealment. The poor man, whose life had been so unlovely, lay at peace at last in the best room at the vicarage, and was presently, with some tears of pity shed by gentle eyes, laid in a quiet corner of the churchyard. There was talk, of course, but the talk was confined to the village, where the possession of a drunken father was not uncommon or uncharitably considered. The worst of the dead man was known only to Jim Foley, and he kept it close even from his wife; while any Spartan thoughts which the Squire might otherwise have entertained, any objections he might have been led to raise to his daughter's match, were rendered futile-seeming and quixotic by the strange mode in which the dénouement had been reached in his presence. He consented, and all—after an interval—went well. But the vicar will sometimes, I think, in the days to come, when prosperity laps him round, wander to the churchyard and recall the hot Summer noon when he walked the roads haunted by that strange sense of forlornness and ruin.

The vast and growing army of amateur photographers will be interested in this light summer love-story, with its setting of camera plates, "hypos," and "pyros." It is from the pen of Frances B. James.

THE PRETTY MISS PAIGE.

A PHOTOGRAPHIC FAILURE.

It was in the early days of dry-plate photography, before the amateur pervaded every corner of the land, that we, Constance and Helen Paige, went to spend the summer at a quiet village on the Maine coast. It was a very picturesque place when we got there, but we had a journey in the stage-coach of about five miles. To begin with, we usually had a race with a train on a bridge parallel to the one we were crossing, and this always excited the horses; then there was the long, hot, dusty ride over the humid, heavy road, through a pretty country, whose beauty one could scarcely admire while suffering from these discomforts. Nearly all the way we saw the sea, for the road skirted the shore, but instead of the delicious coolness suggested by water, there was an intense glare. Under these circumstances it can easily be imagined what a relief it was when the poor tired horses were urged to a spirited dash up a steep driveway, passed a little mound crowned with a table-like monument, to the door of the Phipps Hotel, where the cool breezes which had been desired on the road swept refreshingly through the great hall, with its open glazed doors at either end. Even on the hottest days there was sure to be a breeze here. The landlord had chosen the situation of the house well. Before us stretched the bay, a lighthouse reared its head not far from shore, while the distant light of the shoals gleamed at night across the water. I was told again and again how many lights were visible from the piazza, but I never had a head for figures, so I have forgotten. I am not the clever member of the family. Constance is.

If she were here she would know exactly how many lights there were, and which were revolving and which flashing.

Of course, the first thing we did after we got our dinner and unpacked everything—the camera had been carried with great care and was examined before we touched a thing to see that no damage was done—was to look about for artistic subjects fit to photograph. There was the once splendid tomb, sufficiently ruined to be picturesque, of Sir William Phipps, the pre-Revolutionary hero. There was a fine old house of his not far distant. It was very grand in its day, with its terraced garden stretching down to the sea, but the old building now was used as a sort of tenement. Still its carved staircase was a tempting bit for the lens. Then there was his father-in-law's residence, the oldest house in this very old settlement, but some vandal had cut it in two. Morris Worth told us it was inherited by two brothers, and they thus divided it practically. Morris was such a nice fellow! It was his aunt, Mrs. Lambert, who was to act as chaperon to us girls. He got *so* attached to the camera, and was always ready to be a subject, or to act as a "bit of life in the landscapes"! I confess I had already got tired of being model, and was glad that Connie accepted him as a substitute. Didn't I say Con was the photographer? I am not clever, as I said before, and it is Con who runs the camera, though it really is mine, for Uncle Will gave it to me when I was getting over the bronchitis; of course I could not use it then, so I told Con to use it as if it were her own. She was just wild on the subject and went at it, photographing night and day—or at least developing at night. She brought me horrid, messy plates to look at, and I believe the dampness that always hung around her as she came out of the dark-room—the dressing-room between our rooms she used for this purpose—made me worse. At all events, it was a long time before I was well enough even to go in to see her develop. When I did get well, I believe she had really forgotten that the camera was not hers, and she had such a start and knew so much about the subject that I had not

the courage to try to catch up with her. In fact, I am not clever, and if she did allow me to mix developers and such things, I am sure I should use *hypo* for *pyro*, they sound so much alike, but Con never would take the trouble to teach me; she says it is such a waste of plates! And if I suggest developing one of hers, she is sure I would spoil it—so am I, to tell the truth; so I have to be contented with helping her carry the apparatus; and sometimes, when she is developing a lot of plates, I am allowed to take out those in the hypo to see if they are done, so that she need not stain her fingers. Connie is older than I am and manages everything. If it had not been for Connie, I am sure I do not know what would have become of us when father and mother died, but she just managed everything; she got a good housekeeper to run the house, and we lived on as happily as possible.

But to return to Harbourside; Morris Worth, who had been here the summer before, told us of plenty of beautiful subjects the very first night. We did not know Morris very well before we went to Harbourside; he was in college and we had met him on one or two occasions. His aunt we knew intimately, for she was an old friend of mother's. She was the dearest old thing! —exactly the kind of chaperon girls like, always ready for long excursions by land or sea or willing to let us go for a walk by ourselves.

Morris was soon on good terms with us. It was only the second night after we reached Harbourside; we had been tramping about all day with the camera, we three, and we were resting before Con set up her red lantern in our bedroom. We were sitting in the corner of the piazza, for Mrs. Lambert was a bit exclusive and did not hobnob with the other boarders. As I was saying, we were chatting easily in our corner, when Morris, who had been devoting himself to Con, turned to his aunt.

"She must call me Morris, auntie," said he, "it's such nonsense to say Mr. Worth. Don't you think on the score of your old acquaintance, Aunt Lizzie, that she might call me by my first name?"

"I am sure I don't know why she should not, my dear," replied Mrs. Lambert.

"But then he must call us by our first names, too," said Con. She never asked my leave and I thought her a little forward, but then Con always is more or less. So it was settled that we should be Morris, Connie and Helen; but he soon said he thought Lena a prettier name, and as I really had been baptized Helena, I did not object.

All the subjects which we had photographed that day proved pretty good. Connie usually chooses queer things, and if I suggest something artistic, she replies that I know nothing of the laws of photography; and usually artistic arrangements, she adds, are a failure. Of course, I submit to all this, but it was new to Morris, and it was only his politeness that made *him* back down so easily. Besides, he meant to learn all he could about photography, as he intended to set up a machine of his own some day and he wanted some practical knowledge before he bought it. He soon saw that it never paid to cross Con in anything.

We photographed the tomb, of course, but it was on a hill and Con had not any level, so it was awfully crooked on the plate. When she tried the old house, she did not use the swing-back, so the lines went every which way, but she did get some successful bits. Morris, when he saw the crookedness of the pictures, suggested she should use a string with a penknife on it, as a plumbline. Con did not like this criticism, I knew, but she evidently liked Morris and could stand his remarks better than she could mine.

Well, there is no use telling what we did each day, but the programme was always pretty much the same; a tramp with the camera in the morning, a nap in the afternoon, and developing in the evening. Morris wanted to learn all about developing, so I was obliged to go into the room with that nasty, smoky red-lantern to act propriety for them. In fact, I got heartily sick of photography. We took a view of the half-finished fort; we drove to Mary Chauncy's grave (I have a rose Morris picked from the bush that grows by it); we

made endless sea-views, and views of boats, and islands, and trees, and everything, even the lovely view of the creek behind the house, when the tide was out. I insisted on this. The tide does go out with a vengeance, till there is nothing left but mud-flats—we used to get stuck on these sometimes if we miscalculated when we were coming home from our morning exercises.

There were some rather nice people in the house. The only objection to them was that they always wanted to be photographed and would talk of "photos," which I think sounds vulgar. But they were bent on enjoying their holidays, and had picnics and clambakes innumerable. As a rule, I think picnics horrid, but it was such a relief to have any other object in view beside photographing that I positively enjoyed them. To be sure, Connie always took the camera and Morris always devoted himself to her, and they took endless views, but as the expeditions were not strictly photographic, I could enjoy roaming about without viewing things necessarily from a photographic standpoint; but really it had become such a second nature to me that I believe I never saw a fantastic pile of rocks or a good group of people that I did not mentally decide whether it was a good subject or not. So time went on. Morris was always with Connie, who no longer needed my assistance to carry her traps, and once or twice I begged off from some photographic expedition.

There were but a few men in the house and hosts of girls, as there always are; what becomes of the men who do not go to Mt. Desert in the summer I am sure I do not know. We never go to Mt. Desert; Connie says it is too civilized for photography. All the girls in the Phipps Hotel hated Con, because Morris devoted himself to her, and they even disliked me, as I came in for some of his favors. I know they said spiteful things about Connie when they were not aware that I was listening; our room had a window on the piazza, and when the blinds were down, I could hear them talking outside. Connie never was at home by daylight except when every one was taking siestas, and when she was developing at night, I always insisted that she should

have the windows shut to keep out the mosquitoes and other bugs which were fascinated by the red light. We never went early to bed, as there were always plates to be washed. Connie would sometimes sit up till the small hours waiting for some obstinate one to get rid of its silver in the hypo. I have often waked up in the middle of the night to see her moving stealthily about the room to change the water the plates were soaking in. She did this so often that I vowed I would take another room for myself if she did not stop. Even I sometimes rebel, if I am *not* as clever as she is.

There was one other young man in the hotel, as ugly as sin and not even fascinating. I don't mind saying that Morris is almost handsome. He has nice eyes and hair, and not a bad nose. His mouth is not good or his jaw either, though some say it is a sign of determination, that chin of his, and I know he has a tremendous will of his own; but if he would only grow a beard to hide that chin, he could disguise the outward and visible sign as well as he does the inward grace. Well, this other youth used to try to entertain six girls at once. I don't believe he ever succeeded, for he was so sappy; yet even I thought of setting up a flirtation with him, and I think he would have taken kindly to it, though Connie is "the beautiful Miss Paige." However, Connie would not even speak to him, though he fancied himself a ladykiller; she was so devoted to Morris that she even submitted to his arrangement of a knife on a string, of the proper length, for a pendulum, to count seconds by, as he declared she never made seconds the same length two days running. Now, I ventured at one time to tell her this, but she snapped me up at once, saying I knew nothing about it; but my watch has a second-hand and I have practised counting seconds myself; she has borrowed my watch over and over again, but for all her cleverness she never really learned to count correctly.

At last, we had a rainy spell which I thoroughly enjoyed, for Morris condescended to play billiards with me and we had a splendid time. Connie wouldn't play —she devoted herself to arranging her negatives, var-

nishing them and packing up some to send to Boston to be printed from; she was out of plates, too, and had ordered French to send some down. He wrote that he would send them by private hand with some other mechanism she wanted (I think she had a level sent down at this time, also), as far as Rivermouth, where the stage started from; they were to arrive on a Tuesday. She meant to go over to get them herself. She was sure that even the driver (who was voted to be capital by all the ladies because he undertook to match wools and silks for them at Rivermouth) would not be equal to carrying them with proper care, and I agreed with her when I tried to imagine him driving his four horses and cracking his whip, with the parcel hung by a string between his teeth.

Tuesday morning dawned bright and fair. Connie was distracted; Morris had promised on the first nice day to take her out to photograph a friend's yacht that lay in the bay, and to make matters worse, when the signs of clearing showed themselves the night before, his friend had sent an invitation for us all to go for a day's sail that very Tuesday. Connie had just enough plates for such an excursion, and on Wednesday we were to go to the Isles of Shoals; we had never been there, and she was bent on photographing Celia Thaxter's lighthouse. At last she asked me to go to Rivermouth.

"Now, Lena" (she always called me Lena if she wanted anything, for she saw I liked Morris to call me so), "there's a good girl! It will be a lovely day for a drive on the coach. I almost wish I were going."

"Well, why don't you, and let me go on the yacht? I'll take the views for you." I hated the idea of giving up this yachting trip. I was certain I should enjoy it more than Con, for she is miserable on the water. I knew I should yield to Connie; I always did, but this time I stuck it out manfully; I believe that is an appropriate expression, for men will stand up for things longer than women will.

"You know you would make a mess of the pictures," said Connie, "and I do want to get some nice views

really at sea and some of the yacht, too. You see I can't photograph at the Isles of Shoals to-morrow without those new plates. There's a dear girl! You will go, won't you, Lena?"

Of course I went, though Morris had talked about his classmate, Jack Rice, who would be on board; in fact, it was his uncle's yacht, and I was sure Jack would be nice. Jacks always are. Morris would be twice as nice if his name was Jack. By the way, Morris had progressed in photography. Con had allowed him to take some views without even first choosing the subject, focussing and putting in the plate herself. She even let him mess with the developers, and I must say his pictures were more artistic and really better than hers.

Well, I went to Rivermouth on the stage and sat by the driver. The Masons were leaving that day, so I had company over, and Mrs. Lambert, who did not like my giving up the yachting, gave the driver special injunctions about bringing me safely home. Mrs. Lambert was to go on the yacht to look after the young people. Somehow Morris did not know of my change of plans till the last moment, when he came out to bid the Masons good-by and found me dolefully perched beside the driver.

"Why, Lena, where are you off to? I thought you were going yachting with us. What has happened?" he asked all in one breath. I believe Con was ashamed of herself and did not mean he should know I was not to accompany them.

"I am going to Rivermouth to get some plates and things for Con," I said, looking as melancholy as I could.

"What a shame! Such a lovely day we should have on the water, too—a splendid breeze and a capital run, surely. Can't she wait for the plates?"

"She wants them for the Isles of Shoals to-morrow."

"Any one could bring them, and you mustn't go," said Morris.

I liked that! "Must not!" It did sound so refreshing, it almost paid me for my martyrdom! And he did look so! But I shook my head; no one could be trusted

with the precious machinery. It would be rattled to pieces in the coach.

"Why doesn't she go herself?" he said, scowling.

"She wants to take views on the yacht," I replied.

The driver was getting impatient, for he was bound to catch a train. Con came running out with her purse in her hand.

"I couldn't find your purse, Helen; take mine. There's money enough to pay for the things." I had asked her to get my purse, for I hated to climb down from my seat when I discovered I had not got it with me.

The stage started. We are soon rattling down the steep driveway. The roads are not dusty after this rain. Everything looks green and delicious. The sun is bright, but not hot yet, and above all Morris did look so unhappy because I was not to be of their party. I am sure he thought Connie selfish, and I wonder if my unselfishness impressed him. After all, there is a stiff breeze, and perhaps Connie will not enjoy the sail. (That does not sound unselfish. Yet I do hope she will have a good time, she is so bent on going).

My neighbor on the left grows entertaining as we journey along. He is an elderly youth, who has been down over Sunday to stay with his sisters and even remained till to-day. He is not half-bad, he is a lawyer and knows how to talk. We soon find we have mutual friends and the drive is not so disagreeable as usual, especially as my conscience tells me that I have acted nobly. Somehow my conscience is easily satisfied and even stirs me up to a deal of pride.

Rivermouth is as quiet and stupid as usual. Even the shops are not particularly gay. I do my errands; I have a lot for the people at the hotel, who have taken this opportunity to send for articles with which the stage-driver was not to be entrusted. I get my lunch and indulge in an ice-cream. I had made each person write down her errands, and wrap the money in the papers; these I had put as they were given me in my jacket-pocket, but now I open Con's purse to pay for my lunch. I was just rising from my seat, but I sink

down again; there is Morris' ring in Con's purse. How did it get there? Are they engaged? Does not she intend to let me know it? Was she ashamed to wear it? I collect my wandering thoughts; the waiter is standing before me with the ticket on a tray and is impatient of my delay. I think she suspects I have not enough to pay the fifty-cent bill, and I know the shop is crowded at this hour, so that my seat is wanted. I pay the maid, who looks relieved, and I go out into the street. Which way shall I turn? All my errands are done and the parcels sent to the stage, except the photographic things which are at the station. The old grave-yard not far off attracts me; it is a quiet place to think; no one comes here but the seaside visitors, who happen to be collecting curious epitaphs. I find a shady corner. I see by my watch that it is more than half-an-hour before the stage starts.

Over and over in my mind I puzzle about that ring. Morris did not mean anything when he looked at me so this morning.

He is really engaged to Con. They might have told me. Well, I did love him. I know it was very wrong of me, and he loves Con. I suppose she really cares for him. She must, for everybody likes him. But why did she put the ring in her purse? Why didn't she wear it? My mind works in a circle. I am not clever enough to reason anything straight to a conclusion.

The whistle of the train startled me. I hurry down to the station. I rush about to get the photographic parcel and find the stage nearly ready to start. A couple of big trunks are being strapped on behind; there are two fat ladies inside and a young girl wants the seat by the driver.

"Here you are, Miss," he calls out to me. "I have been keeping the seat for you. That young person wants it, but I tell her it is engaged. Come, give me your hand, Miss; there you are!" he adds as I land safely in my place. One of the stout ladies puts her head out of the window.

"Unless you can sit beside the driver you must come

inside, Mary," she says. "You must not sit on the outside seat."

"Let her have my seat," I suggested. "I'll take the outside one."

"No, you won't, Miss; that is promised to the best young fellow ever I see. You just sit where you are. That girl would scream, I know, before we had gone a mile."

At this moment an agile young man climbs up as if he were accustomed to scramble up rigging. He thanks me as I draw in my skirts to make room for him, and peers anxiously under the seat at a parcel. The young girl gets inside and we are off. We have crossed the bridge and are bowling along smoothly when the driver starts a conversation with my neighbor.

"It was a fine day for a sail, sir, and the old gentleman told me he expected you down in time to go off on a cruise this morning. He was disappointed when he did not find you on the stage last night, sir, especially as he invited a party for to-day. Guess they had a good time," and the landsman chuckles to himself.

"Sorry the governor wanted me, but I missed the train. I had so much business to do. You were about right, I think; the yacht would roll a bit, but uncle is a good skipper,—none better."

Then this must be Jack Rice, thought I. His looks please me so that I am ready to make friends with him when an opportunity offers. I have not long to wait; we are driving close to the edge of the highway to let a carriage pass; a branch of a tree, unseen by the driver, hangs over the road; he is busy, as his off-wheeler is skittish. I know the bough will strike me and I duck my head. Mr. Rice lifts his stick and moves the branch as we reach it, but after all my hat is knocked off. "Thanks," I say.

"That was a narrow escape," says Jack Rice, and he looks at me as I try to put on my hat again. He smiles, "It's crooked, you know."

The ice once broken, it is easy to begin a conversation. Presently I say:

"It is a pity you missed the sail to-day, Mr. Rice.

Your uncle has taken Mr. Worth and his friends on board."

"That is indeed a pity. I wish they had waited. Do you know them? Worth is such a good fellow and he promised to take the pretty Miss Paige with him. His letter is full of her. I shall miss seeing her at the hotel, too."

"Yes, Mr. Worth took Miss Paige and Mrs. Lambert on board. They were going to have a glorious time, I am sure."

"Photographing, of course. Worth told me that the elder Miss Paige is devoted to that art."

"Yes, the pretty Miss Paige is wrapped up in photography," say I a little bitterly.

"Oh, no, you must be mistaken. Worth says distinctly 'the other one.' It is not the pretty one, I am positive; she would never stain those lovely fingers that Morris raves about."

Now I pride myself on my pretty hand, and I know Morris admires that; he made Con photograph it and it is always displayed prominently whenever my picture is taken. Consequently, I blush.

"Really, Mr. Rice, you must be mistaken, it is the elder Miss Paige he likes best—Constance."

"No, begging your pardon, that is not the one. I have his note here; see, he writes the name and blurs it. I can't make it out, but it is not Constance." He takes the note from his pocketbook. I look at it, my heart is in my mouth. Yes, it is evidently Lena, which he has tried to correct to Helen. What am I to do? Shall I tell him who I am? That would be too embarrassing, so I laugh and say:

"Well, he is more devoted to Miss Constance. I know, for I have seen him. I don't think he cares a bit for Helen,—Lena, as he always calls her." Then I change the subject to the view and make him talk about his uncle's yacht. He is an enthusiastic sailor, I know, and he chatters so fast that he forgets all about Worth and his friends. The conversation about this lasts till we nearly reach the Phipps Hotel.

"There's the *Gypsy* now! I know it's she," ex-

claimed Mr. Rice excitedly, as he caught sight of a yacht in what he called the "offing."

"It must be," I rejoin. "It looks like her and no other yacht is likely to be here."

"Yes, that's the *Gypsy*, sir," said the driver, who had hitherto paid no attention to our chatter. "Look, there's her boat going back, now," he adds as he points his whip at a tiny craft stealing out from the shore. "Folks had too much breeze, I reckon," he said, laughing heartily as he gave his horses their customary encourager to dash up the drive. Sure enough, there on the piazza were Mrs. Lambert and Morris, but no Connie.

"Glad to see you back," shouts Morris. "Hello, Rice, is that you? We missed you to-day."

"Where is Connie?" I cry, "not drowned, I hope."

"Oh, no, gone to bed with a headache," says Morris, as he gives me his hand to help me jump down. Mr. Rice had scrambled down first and had turned to help me, but found himself forestalled.

"Here's your precious traps, sir," says the driver, handing down a parcel, which, from its shape and general appearance, I see is a photographic machine.

"Why, Rice, have you taken up the noble art? I wish you had been with us to-day. I am about sick of photography," adds Morris to me as his friend shakes hands with Mrs. Lambert.

"Are you, Mr. Worth?" I say with considerable surprise, and something in his expression, as I look up at him, makes me blush. Then I remember his ring in my sister's purse. "Is Con sick of it, too?"

"I am sure I don't know," he replies, looking cross.

I suspect they have quarrelled, then I remember his letter to Mr. Rice.

"I must run in and see her at once," and leaving them all, I hasten to our room.

"Well, Helen, are you home at last? Do find the cologne and put some on my head. I thought you would never come," says Connie crossly.

I lay the heavy parcel, which has weighed on my mind and body, too, carefully on the table, and as I get the cologne, I remark:

"You don't seem anxious about your photographic things."

"I have *such* a headache, I don't care the least what happens to them."

"Didn't you have a good time?" I ask a little spitefully. Then I add: "It was such a lovely day to go to Rivermouth! Even the drive home was splendid." I know it is horrid to say this, but I am in such a funny frame of mind.

"Glad you had a nice time. It was nasty on the yacht. There was no one but old Mr. Rice and a friend of his, and Jack, who Morris said is so rich, was in Boston."

I am dressing now for dinner, the big bell will ring in a minute, and I intend to look as well as possible. I must try to look like the "pretty Miss Paige."

"I know he was; he came down in the stage with me," I say. "He is so nice!—and he is a photographer, too. At least he has a machine. Shall you want any dinner, Connie dear?" I add as the bell rings.

"No, indeed; I want to sleep and get rid of this splitting headache."

I go in to dinner and fear my face does not look as if I feel much sympathy for Connie's sickness, but how can I help it? Morris, Mrs. Lambert, Mr. Rice and I sit down at our own table at the side of the room. Mrs. Lambert has insisted on this bit of exclusiveness, and we sometimes have to pay for it by the discomfort of having a cold dinner. Mr. Rice wears an embarrassed air, for it is evident he repents his conversation on the stage and thinks of the betrayal of Morris' confidence. But Morris is as cheerful as I am, and we have a bout of brilliant repartee, in which Mr. Rice joins. The girls at the big table are just dying to know what we are laughing about and think us especially mean to monopolize all the gentlemen.

"My dear," says Mrs. Lambert as we are rising, "I did not know you could be so lively. I think Connie usually suppresses you."

"Of course she does, auntie," says Morris, "she never lets Lena say her soul is her own."

"It is pleasant to be relieved of all responsibility for one's soul," say I.

I go to our room and find Connie restless, so I sit down to read her to sleep. After a while I come out and join the party around Mrs. Lambert's hammock. Presently a sailor comes up the steps to tell Mr. Rice that the boat is waiting for him. He says something to the man in an undertone, then asks Mrs. Lambert if we shall not go over to the Isles of Shoals to-morrow on the yacht, instead of the steamer—and adds, with a rather admiring glance at me, that then I would have a chance to see ten yachts. It is quite evident he has heard of my "noble self-sacrifice." Mrs. Lambert accepts, but does not think of Con. I never mention her. Neither does Morris.

The moonlight is lovely. Mr. Rice suggests that we should walk down to the landing with him. Old Mr. Burton, an admirer of Mrs. Lambert, seconds the motion as we walk down to the foot of the hill. We see him off and coming back we pair naturally. We talk, Morris and I, about various things. Suddenly he says:

"Didn't Con lend you her purse this morning? She said, when I asked her for it, that she had put my ring in it."

"Yes, it is there still. I have it in my pocket."

"It was stupid of me to forget it. I miss it. I took it off last night while we were developing. My hands were so wet that I could not put it in my pocket, so she took it."

"Oh," say I, a little bit relieved, I must admit. He looks at me rather suspiciously, I fancy.

"Rice tells me he showed you my letter to-day. It was very reckless of him to show it to a stranger."

"I only saw my name," I say hastily.

"But he told you some of the contents!"

Why under the sun, or moon rather, was I blessed with such a propensity for blushing! But now I mean to spare my blushes and not repeat exactly what Morris said. He confidently assures me, however, that he never cared the least for Connie. He says something about selfishness and remarks that he wanted to learn

photography, but now he is sick of the whole thing and we are never to mention the subject to each other. Besides, he does not mind going without his ring until he gets me a diamond. I tell him I prefer a true blue sapphire, and he says I shall have it. Everything seems to go smoothly, but I dread telling Connie to-morrow. I scarcely rouse her when I go to bed, and in the morning I think she suspects something, for she asks no questions. I find out afterward that Morris betrayed to her his affection for me when he was so angry about my trip to Rivermouth. Connie even goes with us to the Isles of Shoals and flirts atrociously with Jack Rice. I wonder why mother named her Constance, for I think her the least constant person I know, unless her constant fickleness gives her a claim to the name.

But I do not care. I am too elated, and Morris encourages my selfish happiness. I tell him it is very wrong of him not to put a stop to the vice of selfishness which he dislikes so much, but he is happy, too, and it seems Mrs. Lambert is well-satisfied with our engagement.

After all, there is no place like Harbourside. It is the loveliest spot on earth, and the Isles of Shoals is the next loveliest, while old Mr. Rice's yacht is the loveliest thing on the water.

It is probable that few people realize the strength of mind required to change the routine of a life which is more than half spent. Mrs. Parsons, in her pretty "Indian Summer Wooing," somewhat indicated this. In a certain family of six unmarried brothers and sisters, a mortal feud was raised because one member decided that he wished to become a Benedict. He was unable to hold his own, and the matter fell through, though the old man was said to be "meachin'" ever afterward. The tale of "Dannel" and "Angienette" was written for the Boston *Transcript* by Harriet E. Waterman.

GO 'LONG, JENNY!

"WHAT you got, Dannel? A letter?"

"Yes; it's somethin' for you, Hannah."

"Good land! who's been writin' to me? I hain't had a letter, I can't tell the time when. I'm a'most afraid to open it, Dannel. Mebbe it's got bad news."

"Bad news! who from, I'd like to know? You're alwuz expectin' somethin' gloomy."

"Wa'al, there's a good deal that's gloomy in this world—you know that's well as I do."

"Yes, Hannah, 'n there's a good deal that ain't, too." He seldom spoke with so much vigor and decision when differing with his sister.

"*You'd* better open it 'n read it to me; I don't feel as ef I could, somehow."

Daniel Marstin sat down in the old rocker by the west window. It was early August and almost sunset. Beautiful shafts of red light threw themselves over his thin, small figure and his head, with its scanty gray hair.

He tore open the envelope with his finger, but the letter would not come out. "I'm 'fraid I shall tear it all to pieces, Hannah."

"Wa'al, let me take it; I'll try 'n see what I can do. I'm dreadul 'fraid somebody's dead."

"I s'pose somebody *is*, somewhere"; said Daniel, with a quick, short-lived twinkle lighting up his pale blue eyes.

"Good land! who do you think wants to come 'n see us, Dannel?"

"Cousin Angienette?" said Daniel, in a low, timid interrogative.

"Now, how come you to be thinkin' o' *her?*" asked his sister, with considerable asperity of manner. "You ain't been readin' right through the letter, like some o' them folks up in the city the papers tell about, have ye?"

"I come across a little picter yisterday in the green chist up in the garret, that she sent me a good many years ago, jest afore she got married. I guess she was kind o' in my mind. She used to be the chipperest girl 't I ever see in my life, 'n she had such pretty curly hair."

"'Twas red," said Hannah.

"Wa'al, 't want *real* red, kind o' pink."

"We're too old to be chipper now, any of us. I don't see how I *can* have her, no way, Dannel; we ain't seen her this ten year."

"Wouldn't she kind o' liven us up?" asked Daniel, timidly. "We don't see many folks, you know."

"Wa'al, ef you're tired o' havin' your pore old sister 'round, I s'pose I can write 'n have a stranger come in 'n take my place."

Hannah's voice trembled, and her eyelids grew red, one tear gathering force enough to trickle slowly down her cheek, like a slender rill, which has no great source behind it.

"I guess I wouldn't think anything about it, then,—p'raps she might make ye some work. I didn't know but she could help along with the quiltin'; she used to be a master hand at sewin'. I could tackle up 'n go to the deepo for her as well 's not, now I'm through with the hayin'."

"You'll have to write the letter, Dannel, I don't seem to feel like it, my stomach's so weak. I s'pose I shall be sorry I had her come, I don't want her meddlin' with my cookin'."

That day week the three cousins were seated in the best room, which led out of the kitchen. It was a mere

box of a room, and had a musty odor, it was so seldom opened. Two large old maples shaded the windows, and grew so near that they seemed like grim sentinels, forbidding the entrance of heaven's light and breath.

"I don't see's you look much older 'n you did ten or fifteen years ago, Angienette," said Daniel, as he crossed one leg over the other, and tried to make himself stationary in the slippery horse-hair chair, with its hard, unyielding seat.

"Wa'al, I don't know's I feel old; I've got good health, 'n sech nice children! There ain't nothin' they don't try to do for me, sence their poor father died. But I'm fifty-five next month. That's older 'n you, Hannah, by three years."

"I hain't never hed sech health as you've hed," said Hannah, as she left the low chair and took a seat in one the back of which was tall and straight and stiff.

Her figure was lithe and firm, and her complexion, though colorless, had the hue of health.

"Why, you never was sick but once, Hannah," said her brother, "'n that was more 'n twenty year ago."

"Well, I ain't been real sick, but I don't seem to feel so strong as I was. I git dreadful tired washin' 'n ironin' the same day."

"I sh'd think you would," said her cousin; "what makes ye do it?"

"Good land! I alwuz did. You don't s'pose I'm goin' to have it 'round two days, do ye, for jest Dannel 'n me 'n Hiram. I want to set down Tuesdays. I'm piecin' calico to make some quilts. I'd ought to make three this fall, ef I can."

"I'll take holt 'n help, ef you want me to, Hannah—ef I sha'n't be in the way; I like to sew."

"Air your eyes good?"

"Eyes good? Why, yes, of course they be; what's to hender? I don't never use glasses, nuther; I was always sort o' near-sighted, you know. Some say them kind of eyes is stronger 'n others, I don't know. Why, *you* ain't feelin' like an old woman yit, are ye?"

"Trouble makes folks feel old, Angienette. We lost a cow in the spring, 'n our chickens ain't done well

this summer. Five died, or more; we'd ought to hev fifty, ef they'd done well."

"We've got some beauties left," said Daniel, "'n the man that keeps the hotel up by the lake says he'll take all we can spare, 'n give a cent a pound more'n anybody else will. The money's all Hannah's, though. I don't want none of it. She works hard enough runnin' after 'em."

He did not say that a good share of the running after was done by himself, save on the few occasions when he chanced to be from home.

The second week in September had come, and Cousin Angienette's visit was almost over. She was to leave the next day but one.

"I wish you'd ride up to the lake with me to-morrow mornin'," said Daniel. "I'm goin' to see about a shoat. Sim Perkins has got a terrible nice one, 'n I want to hev it ef he don't charge too much."

"I hadn't oughter leave Hannah; she's got the bread to bake 'n the kitchin floor to wash, 'n I don't know what else."

"You go right 'long!" said Hannah, in what was for her a very cheery tone. "There ain't any more work than what I kin do well enough. You've helped me so much sense you've bin here, that I feel more like what I used to be than I have this ten year. I declare for 't, Angienette, I'd got to be so down-hearted I didn't seem to be one thing nor annuther. I thought I wanted somethin', 'n I b'lieve in my heart 't was you I wanted all the time; 'n Dannel, *he* ain't ben so chirked up, I don' know when."

"I s'pose you want to start early, Dannel," said his cousin.

"I was calkilatin' ef we could hev breakfast by half-past five, or so, we might get off about six, while it's cool—we're goin' to hev a hot day, jedgin' from the signs. The sun set awful red to-night."

A thin mist hovered over the earth, and the grass was heavy with dew. The air, already autumnal, encircled the mountain tops with ashen veils, softening the tints, and blurring the outlines. The old wagon, with its

worn buffalo covering hanging over the back of the seat, was drawn by Daniel Marstin's twenty-year-old mare. She jogged along with the reins dangling more loosely over her neck than ever, if could be; and the little frequent jerk was missing this morning. The wisdom of this laxity in discipline was apparently questioned, for the conscientious animal at length stopped short, and turned her head to look at the couple behind. Seeing that her master was in his usual place, she broke into a gentle, satisfied trot.

The lake was in view, and the air grew more invigorating. As they neared the water's edge, the sun burst forth and poured down on the glassy surface a shower of diamonds.

Tiny waves curled up on the segment of beach, and a soft breeze stirred the little ringlets under Angienette's straw bonnet, which had been trimmed by the village milliner only the day before. "Go 'long, Jenny," said Daniel. "She don't care much for what *I* say," he added, looking across the water to the dark old mountain beyond.

"That's 'cause you're gentle with her, Daniel. I guess you never abused a dumb animal."

"No, I couldn't do that." Then, after a pause, "I alwuz thought, Angie, that somehow I'd ought to a' bin merried, ef I'd only found anybody that would 'a cared about me. But I s'pose it's too late to be thinkin' o' that now."

"You ain't sixty yit, Dannel."

"No, but I'm close onto it. Go 'long, Jenny."

"You ain't called me Angie before sence the day I told you I'd sent you my ambrotype. I never knew whether you got it, Dannel."

"Wa'al, I couldn't seem to make up my mind to say anything about it, but it's rolled up in a little silk handkerchief I meant to 'a sent ye for a weddin' present. My courage kind o' give out, so ye never hed it. Go 'long, Jenny."

"Couldn't I hev it now?"

"Do ye want it, Angie?"

No answer came. Daniel looked from out the tail of

his eye at the round cheek with its pink tinge and saw two generous tears pouring down.

"Whoa, Jenny. I don't know's you'd do it, Angie, but—can't ye come back 'n live with us in the old house after ye've bin home 'n seen the folks? Hannah, she'd be dreadful pleased ef ye would—to be her sister, ye know, Angie."

"I was jest thinkin' o' that, Dannel,—I didn't know how she'd take it."

"I know—she told me yisterday."

A robin teetered along and with a glad chirrup circled up in the air, like Richter's lark, "with a loud day in his throat."

"The birds'll all be goin' now before long, Cousin Angie."

"We'll see 'em together, next year, please God," said Angienette.

"Go 'long, Jenny," said Daniel Marstin.

This interesting tale of the Civil War is truly from the lips of an old soldier, and is written for ROMANCE by Clarence F. Cobb.

CRAZY IKE.

I STROLLED out to the Soldiers' Home again the other day, and asked the Sergeant:

"Can't you tell me something more about your experiences as a scout, Sergeant?"

"Well, pard, I had just lots of them. We uster call ourselfs scouts, but we was spies. After I were caught down to Fredericksburg I thought I'd never want to go into the Johnnies' lines no more, but in a few days I felt just like a-going again.

"There were a feller in our regiment who were the funniest cuss you ever see; he laid over all you ever heard of for nonsense and nobody could git any duty out of him. I uster think he were crazy—he'd do the most outlandish tricks, and we all called him Crazy Ike. Nobody knowed where he come from, and sometimes he'd be gone for more'n a month, and nobody knowed where he'd been, and when he'd get back, our Captain would ram him into the guard-house, but he'd take his punishment cheerful-like and be the life of all about him. On a march, he'd throw away his knapsack and piece and come into camp with just nothing at all, pard, but in a little while he'd git all the equipments somewheres. He were smart enough; could make out the muster-rolls and keep the comp'ny's things all straight, but he'd be drunk more'n half his time and yet nobody ever see him touch a drop of liquor. One time when we had a big review after Hooker took command, in January, sixty-three, and the old man and his staff come a-riding down the lines and the men was all a-hurrawing, right behind the staff Crazy Ike come a-galloping on a mule, and he had an iron camp-kittle on his head, and the most outlandish uniform on, and he hurrawed for General George Washington; and the

men when they presented arms couldn't help it, pard, they bust right out a-laughing, and our Colonel and the Adjutant dragged Ike off of that there mule and rammed him into the guard-house to be bucked and gagged, but bimeby an order come down from headquarters to let up on Ike. One night he got out a drum and beat the long roll and we all tumbled out and fell in, and the Colonel were the maddest man you ever see and ordered him to carry a log for a week; but an order come down from headquarters again to let him go. Nobody understood the cuss. I went a-fishing with him wunst when we was a-laying down there, and when we got back to camp he were drunk. I knowed he hadn't had no liquor, and I couldn't git it through me what he wanted to be playing drunk for.

"And then we had a drummer named Adams, the pootiest boy you ever see. He warnt more'n about fifteen, and everybody liked him. He were as tender as a gal and wouldn't listen to any hard yarns, and he always tended service when the Chaplain preached and he uster say his prayers every night at taps. I ain't much on religion myself, pard, but it don't do nobody no harm. I uster jist love that there boy, and he were mighty thick with Crazy Ike all the time.

"Along about in March, sixty-three, Old Joe sent for me to report down to his headquarters one day, and I went down there and he were mighty glad to see me. He asked me about my being captured and tried when I were over there afore, and I told him all about it, and he said he wanted a good man to go over there again, but he wouldn't ask me to go because they might know me. I tell you, pard, I didn't want to go; I *was* afeard, but I was afeard he'd see I were afeard, and I says to him: 'General, I'm a-going.'

"He told me I had better not, but I stuck to going, and he got out a map and told me I could take that along; but you kin jist bet your boots that I didn't want that there map about my clothes, so he sent his orderly out for one of his young ingineer officers—it weren't Warren, pard, but he were an ingineer—and he showed me how the Rappahannock and the Rapidan

run and where Chancellorsville were, and Old Joe told me there were a brigade of Johnnies a-laying round Chancellorsville and he wanted me to hang around there for a few days, and I'd find something to bring him afore I knowed it.

"Well, that night, I think it were, or maybe it were the next night, I ain't dead-sure which, I sits up at the old man's headquarters, and I jist squeezed that there map into my head, and the next day I goes to General Patrick and gits a Johnny pris'ner and I swopped clothes with him, and then I got the General's barber to shave me, and when he were done I hardly knowed myself I were so changed. The next night I went away up the river and crossed at a ford, but I couldn't git their countersign and I had ter crawl through their pickets. It were mighty ticklish, I tell you, pard, but it were a-raining and I got through all right and I were covered with mud, and in the morning I were the dirtiest cuss you ever see. The next day I got to Chancellorsville, and sure enough the brigade of Johnnies were there and I made out I were lame and hobbled right into camp. I were such a sick-looking cuss they made lots of fun of me, and one of their officers asked me where I come from.

"'I come up from the Jeemes through Richmond on the keyyars, and I wanter 'list kase the conscripters are after we-uns, but they 'lowed at Fredericksburg I'm too lame. I can't tote a muskit, but I had ter cook for daddy when mammy died, and I was right smart of a cook, too,' I says.

"'You're sure you can cook?' he says.

"'I was just agwine to ax you-uns to let me cook.'

"'Well,' he says, 'if you choose to cook for this company, you can.'

"And I were all right, pard. They all took a fancy to me and treated me first-rate, and I cooked pones for 'em and I got along all right.

"Two or three days after that, when I were busy about the cook-shed all alone, one of their men come in and says: 'Sarge.'

"I dropped the kittle I had in my hand, pard, and says: 'What?'

"'You're a sweet scout, you are,' he says, 'to be taken unawares like that. Do you know me?'

"'No,' I says, all of a shake.

"'You don't? Now, try right hard and see if you don't know me.'

"And I looked at him, pard, and I'm d—d if it weren't Crazy Ike!

"'Pick up that kittle and be right here at taps to-night. It's going to rain. You can get back through their lines.'

"I were so dumb-foundered, pard, that I had to shake myself together to see that I were all there, and at taps I went there and Ike were there and says: 'Take this to General Hooker and tell him I'll be over in less than a week,' and he give me a big wallop,—'and tell him that Adams has been caught and tried on a drum-head, and is to be hanged. Go at once and get back as soon as you can.'

"Well, pard, I scooted through their lines again, and when I struck our pickets, I told the captain of the guard to put me down at General Hooker's headquarters right away, and he took it in and sent me with some cavalry, and we just went a-b'iling and we knocked the old man up. He sent out for me and I went in and saluted him, and he ripped open that there wallop and in it were as pooty a map as you ever see of all the land about Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville.

"'Any verbal message, Sergeant?' says Old Joe.

"'No, General,' I says, 'but he told me to tell you that Adams were caught.'

"And the old man says with a snicker: 'And yet you say, Sergeant, there is no verbal message.'

"'Certainly not,' I says, 'only that there wallop.'

"'How was Adams caught?'

"'I don't know,' I says.

"'Well, well, well. I'm sorry to hear it. Why would he take that boy with him? Do you return?'

"'Right away, sir.'

"'Good luck to you. Is there an officer with that cavalry outside?'

"'Yes, General.'

"'Send him in here.'

"And I went out and called him in, pard, and he saluted Old Joe, and Old Joe says to him: 'Lieutenant, put this man at the Ford as quickly as you can; never mind the horses.' And then he says to me: 'Let me hear from you, Sergeant, in less than a week,' and we went a-b'iling for the Ford again, pard, and I got back to Chancellorsville afore daybreak the wust tired man you ever see. Ike hung around the cook-shed, but didn't say a bloody word to me that day, but at night, after taps, he come down. He were a-feeling mighty blue, I tell you, about little Adams, and he told me they had been a-working together ever since the war opened. I felt like a pudding-head, pard, when he were a-telling me, to think that I didn't know till then that they was a couple of scouts, and I see through Ike's playing crazy. You see he didn't want our men to know what duty he were on. I asked him how Adams were caught, and he told me that he said something kinder careless one day and that told on him. He weren't to be hung for three or four days, and Ike were mighty busy a-thinking about it, and you kin just bet that there long head of his'n were a-hatching something.

"'It's a bloody bad business,' I says.

"'Indeed it is,' says Ike, 'but he isn't hanged yet.'

"'Where is he?'

"'Just over here, about two miles, under guard.'

"'Can't we go for the guard?'

"'Nonsense. That won't do. There are too many of 'em.'

"'Nobody smells you?' I says.

"'Lord, no,' he says, 'why, I'm a favorite with our Captain here.'

"'How long have you been over?'

"'Ever since the month after Fredericksburg. I came up from Richmond with the last detachment of recruits, he thinks.'

"'I bet yer,' I says, 'Adams sent for a chaplain.'

"'Certainly,' he says. 'He did that right away. Don't you ever speak to me in the daytime.'

"'All right,' I says.

"When the day come around for little Adams to swing, our regiment fell in and marched over and I hobbled along to see it. I kinder felt that something were a-going to happen, and I watched Ike in the ranks with his muskit, but he never noticed me. They brought the boy out in a cart and a hollow square were formed, and the Provost-marshal went to reading the sentence and the little cuss were a-looking mighty sad, but he were game and he prayed with the chaplain. I limped up close to Ike and he were a-breathing hard, but he never looked at me; he were just a-keeping his eye on Adams. Well, when everything were ready, Ike left the ranks, marched up to the Provost-marshal, saluted him, and whispered in his ear.

"'What!' says the lieutenant. 'How do you know that?'

"'I've known it a long time,' says Ike.

"Well, pard, you never see such a whispering and a talking among officers. I couldn't git it through me what were up, and the Kurnel of our regiment said he'd assume the authority to suspend the proceedings till he could write to headquarters, and the regiment marched back to camp, and after taps, that night, Ike come for me and says: "'Come, Sarge; we've got to get away from here to-night.'

"'Well, I'm d—d if I do,' I says.

"'You think not?'

"'No,' I says, "I ain't a-going till I try to git Adams out of his scrape.'

"'Adams is all right. I know the Southern people well. We are at war now, but a better people never lived. When they find out what I dropped in that lieutenant's ear, Adams will be released.'

"'That may be all hunky,' I says, 'but I don't leave here till I know it.'

"'You leave with me to-night. Not another word! When we arrive at General Hooker's headquarters, I'll tell you what's what. Besides, I have their counter-

sign and we can cross without trouble. We will both be suspected to-morrow and arrested. Trust me, I'd lay down my life for Adams as willingly as you would yours, but 'twould be a useless sacrifice now. He's as safe now as he could be in our lines. I'll trust him to the inherent nobility of these gallant Southern people.'

"Well, pard, what could I do? Ike were level-headed and I knowed he were game and would er died for the boy, so I told him I'd go. We got through their lines all right, and when we got to the old man's headquarters he were glad enough to see us and give us some commissary, but he were a-feeling mighty bad about Adams and he asked us when he were executed.

"'Oh, he isn't executed, General,' says Ike.

"'I'm glad to hear it. I presume they'll hang him shortly. I've sent a note to General Lee, under flag of truce, interceding for him on account of his youth, but I fear it will not save him.'

"'Adams is not so young, General, as you may think,' says Ike.

"'Not over fifteen or sixteen, is he?'

"'Why, General, he's within two years of my age?'

"'Pshaw,' says Old Joe. 'He's a mere boy. Why, you're thirty. How long have you known him?'

"And Ike beginned to smile, pard, in a curious kinder way and looks at Old Joe just so and says: 'I've known Adams, General, since fifty-four, nine years ago, and he has been with me ever since. I have always had to support him, but he has been a close friend of mine. When I enlisted in sixty-one, he was bound to come, and he came. It was the wildest kind of freak, but argument and entreaty couldn't shake his resolution. I have saved him over the river. When I told the Provost-marshal, whose duty it was to hang him, what Adams is, I knew that information would save his life.'

"'And what did you tell him?' says Old Joe.

"'I told him Adams was a woman.'

"Pard, Old Joe never said a word, but he just looked at Ike, and I flopped right down in a camp-chair and says: 'Well, I'm d—d!'

"'Yes, General, Adams is my wife.'

"'And you have supported her for nine years,' says Old Joe, 'which is entirely proper; in my opinion, no man had a better right. The Confederates won't hang a woman. This is quite a little romance. When she is returned through our lines let me advise you to send her home. She makes the third woman in the ranks of the Army of the Potomac.'

"And that's just all there were about it, pard. It were all as true as preaching, and just after the fight at Chancellorsville the Johnnies sent her through the lines, and she and Ike are a-living in Brooklyn to-day."

It is generally supposed that Eve manufactured her fig-leaf garments with the aid of some sort of an improvised thimble. This idea is unsettled by the following anonymous tale, said to be historical by Anna L. Wangeman, who translated it for ROMANCE.

THE GOLDSMITH OF ANTWERP.

It was in the beginning of the sixteenth century. A wonderfully fine Sunday morning in winter had dawned; the clear, cold winter sun was sparkling on the snow-covered roofs of Antwerp. The sunbeams climbed and glided merrily along the houses, gilding the glittering stained-glass window-panes. Then they jumped gleefully over to the smooth fields of ice formed by the frozen canals which encircle the city.

At the north end of the town, a small, well-frozen lake had been formed by the outlets of the smaller canals. Church was just over; the last sounds of the bells were still trembling on the crisp air, as they died away. A merry throng was on the lake; a delightful picture of youthful gayety presented itself to the visitor. The slender forms of youths and maidens, with their glittering skates, seemed to skim along as if driven by the wind. Two by two, the older ones skated by, followed by boys and girls, forming long chains.

Every now and then, a pretty girl swept by all the other skaters, who bowed to her respectfully and watched her with admiration. But, like a proud swan, she went on farther and farther. Her elegant dress betrayed the wealthy patrician. A blue velvet gown, falling in rich folds, and trimmed with fine fur, enveloped her form, and under the turban which she wore, and which was trimmed with flowing red plumes, gleamed a mass of golden hair which fell in two heavy braids to the edge of her gown. The wonderful, dreamy eyes in her beautiful aristocratic face often looked searchingly among the young patricians, but only to turn away in disappointment and with intense longing.

Finally the form of a young man, coming from the other end of the lake, came gliding toward the pretty skater. Her eyes sparkled with joy, he bowed to her reverently—but then he confidently grasped the little hands which she stretched toward him. They glided on in silence for some time.

"Why did you remain all alone, Antje?" he asked suddenly, "the young patricians will think it haughtiness on your part."

Antje drew up her rosy lips in scorn. "That just suits me, Cousin Adrian!" she laughed, "I wanted to wait for you undisturbed!"

"Oh! Antje, you must not do it; as grateful as your cousin is to you for your friendship, you must never forget what a deep, immeasurable abyss separates the wealthy Anna Van Der Solst from the poor goldsmith, Adrian Van Benschotten!" The handsome man spoke earnestly and mildly, but not without a painful twitch of his finely curved lips.

"Oh!" pouted Antje, "but suppose I do not like anyone else as well as poor Adrian!" and with a proud, loving look she scanned his noble, stalwart form in its plain brown doublet.

"Adrian! do you know whom you resemble—in comparison with the gaudy patricians? You are like the falcon among the bullfinches!"

"Sweet child, it is well that you can jest; I feel as if I should like to die—for I come to you to-day for the last time—to bid you farewell—I am going to England!"

"Go!" she said icily. She pushed him from her, but only to draw herself up again, closer and more confidingly to him. It seemed as if they were made one for the other, for they were the most distinguished-looking couple among the crowd of young people.

"You see, Antje—I must go, hard as it is for me to do so. My honor demands it. It is my duty. Shall I notice, Antje, how my little cousin's affection grows stronger, day by day? To say nothing of my own heartache! And to know that we may never come together! It is better that I go while my Antje is still young, so that she may more easily forget the poor goldsmith.

You will know and love a better man, but I shall remain true to my first love!"

"Adrian! I shall never love any one else but you!"

"Poor Antje! It is in vain; the proud Mynheer Van Der Solst will never give his only child in marriage to a poor apprentice——"

"You are an artist, Adrian," Antje answered vivaciously. "Even to-day I will be the wooer for you at my father's feet!"

Adrian shook his head. "You don't understand Mynheer's patrician pride!" He tore himself away, violently. "Farewell, Antje!"

"Soon I will send you good news!" Antje called after him.

He smiled sadly, waved one final farewell, and disappeared.

. . . . . .

The finest house on the Schelde quay belonged to Mynheer Van Der Solst.

A stately repose reigned in the reception-hall, covered with rugs and decorated with large chests, mirrors, weapons and shields, which led to a suite of richly furnished apartments. The last one was Antje's own, a charming and dainty room.

Rare tropical plants adorned it. Costly silver covered the toilet-table. Heavy red silk draperies fell from the golden crown of the tester of her bed. Gobelin tapestries from Brabant showed scenes from the Bible. In the midst of this splendor, Antje sat, in the cosy, upholstered bay-window, and gazed sadly out upon the dead winter landscape. Her eyes were red from weeping; now and then a soft sob escaped her half-opened lips. There had been a terrible scene. Mynheer—her father, who had always been so kind and lenient—now swore high and low that only a wealthy merchant should become the husband of his only daughter. "I will never give you to that poor beggar!" was his last word.

It was not on account of the difference in rank, for the goldsmith's art was greatly honored in the sixteenth century, but Mynheer considered Adrian an idle dreamer.

"Profession has no golden bottom with that fellow!" grumbled the excited man. "I shall never entrust my greatest blessing to a man who will never be prosperous!"

Time crept by slowly and weighed heavily on Antje; finally she found some diversion in her embroidery-frame. The beautiful lace collar upon which she was at work had been intended for a bridal gift for Adrian.

"Now the collar shall ornament my shroud!" thought Antje, and gave way to sombre thoughts. She did not even notice that she had repeatedly pricked her middle finger, until the drops of blood from it had already made a large red spot; the fine Brussels cambric was spoiled. Antje angrily threw the frame into a corner. Just then Greta, her maid, entered and handed Antje a small package bearing Adrian's hand-writing.

Quickly Antje broke the seal; a small silver article, set with a blue stone, fell out and rolled down to Antje's feet. Inquisitively, Antje picked it up, and looked at the strange trinket in astonishment; then put it down indifferently, took up the parchment and read:

"My dear, sweet Antje, I knew very well that you would not send me a good message. Now I am on my way to England; believe me, I act only from motives of pure, disinterested love. But you, my dear child, must obey your noble father, who is anxious for your welfare only.

"Farewell, my darling! Be happy, and try to forget.

"Ever your loving

"ADRIAN.

"P. S. Perhaps I may give you just a little souvenir! The silver trinket is a little cap which I thought of for the protection of your delicate finger, when I noticed how often you pricked it at your embroidery."

Then Antje alternately pressed the letter and the little finger-cap to her lips, and held up her hand as she made the vow: "Adrian, I will wait until you return to take your Antje with you!"

. . . . . .

Three years have passed: a long magnificent wedding-procession is moving to the grand Jacob's cathedral at Antwerp.

The pretty bride, who smiles so happily under her lace veil, is Antje Van Der Solst. She has not lost any of the freshness of youth, but has blossomed out even more beautiful and queenly, a full-blown, fragrant rose. The bridegroom is a wealthy, stately-looking man from Sheffield. He looks his best in his costly velvet waistcoat, decorated with a wide golden necklace of honor—altogether a distinguished figure among the patricians following the bridal pair.

Antje is following the man from Sheffield to the altar, with her father's blessing—and still she has kept her vow, for the bridegroom is Adrian Van Benschotten, the inventor of the thimble.

The practical Englishmen had soon appreciated the value of the invention, and through it Adrian had attained riches and honors.

The renowned goldsmith of Antwerp lived a long, happy life with his faithful Antje. At their golden wedding, however, the venerable couple still showed to their great-grandchildren the origin of their fortune—the first thimble.

Men have the reputation of being more inconstant than women; but it is probable that, given the same opportunities, one sex is about as bad as the other. Human nature is human nature, no matter what its setting may be. The tale of this especial delinquent is by Russell Hersh.

UP THE MISSISSIP.

"It's kinder lonesome like an' queer, isn't it?" said grizzled old Jack West, the pilot, as he waved his pipe toward the shore. "I never come through here on a dark night like this, an' hear them whipperwills a-screekin', an' frogs a-croukin', an' wolves a-howlin', without feelin' a kinder cold creepin' down my back. It *is* a queer place, too, as you'd see for yourself if it was daylight. I s'pose the ole Mississip here is six or seven miles from bank to bank, an' nobody knows how many islands, an' swamps, an' lakes, an' sloughs there is. A man might get inter some of them sloughs, an' row an' row for days, an' never git out, and never see a thing but green willers, an' lily pads, an' snakes. It 'ud be a mighty unpleasant place for a man to get lost in, too, 'cause nobody lives around here, an' there is so few steamboats nowadays, like as not he never could tell when he struck the steamboat channel, an' he mightn't find a way out for days. I've been on the river now for thirty years, an' I wouldn't undertake to find a way out every time. There isn't a stretch on the river I wouldn't rather go through than this."

We were sitting out on the forward end of a log-raft which was being pushed, or in river phrase, "towed" down the stream by a stern-wheel steamer. The night was very dark, and I had been trying to express to the skeptical and experienced Jack my amazement at the skill of a pilot who could pick out a way for a steamboat and a dozen acres of loosely joined logs through such impenetrable darkness. It was Jack's time of rest, and he was good-naturedly tolerating my astonishment as the natural ignorance of a landsman.

"Is it very dangerous?" I asked, as the old man paused.

"Yes, it's ticklish enough," he said, "but I don't mind that. It's because it's so lonesome an' gloomy. An' then, you know, Ole Joe uset to hang out right here onc't, an' I guess any ole timer like me has got a kinder tender spot 'bout Ole Joe. That's his island right over there now—that's Old Joe's island. What? Can't see it, eh? Can't see anything but a big black shadow, can't you? Well, if I couldn't see more'n that, many's the good boat I'd a banged to pieces on the tow-head up yonder. An' many's the time I've seen it when I wished I didn't, an' when I wished that either that island or me was in Halifax or some other place.

"Who was Ole Joe? Say, you don't mean to tell me you never heard tell of Ole Joe? Great Scott! is that so? Why, Ole Joe was a little bit the slickest pil't that ever held a wheel on the Mississip. Ole Joe, the boys called him, though he wasn't old at all, but because everybody thought so much of him, an' he seemed so fatherly-like to all the boys. Joe Burroughes he was called on the books, but I don't think that was his name, because he was French; an' that don't sound Frenchy, does it? He was a queer fellow, Ole Joe, the queerest I ever see, an' the best-hearted, too—so quiet, an' still, an' mindin' his own business, an' still so good to everybody. Why, he had a heart in him bigger'n ox. I cubbed with Joe, an' he taught me the river, an' then I ran with him for near ten years. I thought as much of Ole Joe as I did of my own father, an' my own father couldn't a-been a bit kinder to me'n Joe was, neither. He wasn't like most pil'ts. There wasn't nobody in any kinder trouble that Ole Joe wouldn't help. Many's the time I've seen him when a roustabout had mashed his hand off with a barrel-chime or been slugged a'most to death by one of them beautiful ole mates we uster have in them days, go down an' dress the nigger's wounds like a doctor, an' slip a gold piece inter his hand, an' any other pil't in the world ud a-thought no more 'bout it 'n if a pig had been stuck. An' Joe was so cool he never lost his nerve, no matter

how tight a place he might be in, an' he could nurse a boat outer more tight places than any man on the river. For he was a lightnin' pil't. Suffering Jerusalem! but he was a lightnin' pil't! He could take a boat from St. Louis to St. Paul with his eyes shut an' both hands tied behind his back an' never turn a hair. An' yet, nobody ever thought of bein' jealous of Joe. Why, there was scarcely one of the boys he hadn't helped outer some scrape 'r other, an' the meanest raftsman outer the Black or the Wisconse knew Joe an' respected him, an' wouldn't lift hand agenst him for money.

"Nobody knew where Joe came from. He showed up one day at St. Louis, took a trip or two to St. Paul, took out day papers, went to runnin' regular, an' in two years was the best pil't on the river. He'd been on the water in Canady all his life, an' it come natural to him.

"Every winter Joe'd disappear, an' nobody knew where he'd gone, an' nobody'd see him again until the next season opened. He never said anything 'bout where he come from, or what he'd been, or where he'd go winters, an' he had a way of lookin' at persons that asked him unpleasant questions that kinder discouraged conversation, so to speak.

"But one summer Joe didn't show up as usual, an' so ole Capt. Marks, of the *Tom Jasper*—the boat Joe an' I'd been on four years then—had to ship another pil't. You see, somehow or other, Joe had slipped up the river here that winter, an' built a mighty nice, cozy little house right here on this yere island, an' fixed up a garden round it, an' made everything slicker 'n a ladies' cabin. Then he disappeared again. The boys thought we'd never see him again this time, an' some said he was dead, an' I was afraid of it myself.

"Well, the next spring, the boat was lyin' one day at the St. Louis levee, loadin' up for her first trip. I was a-sittin' in the pil't house, a-smokin' an' a-waitin', when all of a sudden I just happened to look down on the levee—an' the next minute I jumped as if I'd been shot. There was Ole Joe a-walkin' down the levee, proud as a lord, with a slim, dark-haired little woman

a-hangin' on to his arm, an' a big black dog a-comin' after. He come straight up to de pil't house an' interduced the little woman as his wife, an' me so dumbfoundered I couldn't say a word, for it never crossed my mind that Joe might marry. She was a pretty little woman, too, with hair an' eyes as black's a boiler, an' as chipper an' free 's Joe was quiet. You see they'd been children together 'way back in Canady, an' that's where Joe'd been them winters.

"So Joe an' his wife was passengers with us that trip, an' the little black-eyed woman got to be a great favorite an' everybody took an interest in the young couple an' give 'em presents an' things. Only I never took much fancy to his wife. There was something 'bout her I couldn't go. The boys said it was because I was jealous of her, an' made lots of fun 'bout it, but I guess that didn't hurt nobody.

"Well, they landed at the island, an' Joe opened up the house he'd built, an' the passengers loaded 'em up with more presents, an' we left 'em there. 'Most every time I'd go by I'd stop an' chat a bit with Joe in his cozy little house, an' twice he come up to St. Paul with his wife on the *Tom.* Near the end of the season, he'd got things fixed up at the island, an' he went back to runnin' regular. Sometimes he'd take his wife a trip or two, an' sometimes he'd drop a trip to rest at the little house. It seemed to me, though, after a while, that Joe wasn't as happy as he was that fust day, an' his wife's face had a sour look that told a pretty plain story, I thought.

"So things went on for a year, Joe spendin' his winter on his island, of course.

"One evenin', along in August of the next year, we was a-bowlin' down through here just as the sun was goin' down. Just as we turned the bend above Joe's house and swung inter sight, I saw the stern of a little white skiff round the end of an island opposite Joe's and slip inter a slough outer sight. It was a queer thing to see in them parts, an' didn't look right. Joe saw it, too. I could tell by the way he gave a little jump, though he didn't say anything. We stopped at

the landin', an' Joe went up to the house. He was gone longer'n usual, an' I noticed when he come out he was very pale an' she didn't come to the door with him, as she always uster. He was nervous an' kinder rattled after that, an' couldn't sleep. As we come back up the river, he kept gettin' worse an' worse, an' it seemed 's though he couldn't wait to get home. As soon as we got to shore, he jumped off the gang plank an' run up to the house. The door was locked. He kicked it open an' rushed in. In a minute he staggered out an' fell up again the side of the house as though he was drunk. After a while he went in again, an' when he come out, he had the dead body of his big black dog in his arms pettin' an' nursin' it like it was a baby, an' goin' about as though he was dazed. An' then he crep' back to his room, an' we didn't see him again until his watch come round. 'Cept that he was so very white an' his lips was drawn so tight, you'd never have known that anything was the matter.

"Well, Joe never said anythin' about what had happened, an' kep' to his post as usual, though the story got 'round that his wife had run away an' left him. He stuck to me closer than ever, an' when the season closed he didn't go away, but stayed with me in St. Louis.

"When the season opened again, me an' Joe went back to the wheel as before. But I noticed that Joe'd never pass his island on watch if he could help it, an' when he did, he'd always call a *cub* to take the wheel, an' run down to get a bite to eat, though such times no one ever seen him that I could ever hear of.

"That season passed an' the next, an' Joe stayed with me winters. Nobody ever came to the little house on the island. The weeds growed up around it, an' the wind blew the chimneys down, but Joe never saw it. All the time he was gettin' more an' more moody, so's for days he wouldn't speak to any one but me, an' often he'd take me by the hand an' look inter my eyes in a way that would make me cry, tough as I thought I was.

"One night, three years after he went ter the house that day, an' a night as dark an' ugly as this, I was

a-holdin' the wheel just as we swung into the stretch above the island, an' Joe was a-standin' by my side lookin' out on the water. I looked to see him go down below as he always uster, but he didn't. 'Stead of that, he walked to the side of the pil't house an' stood lookin' out. All of a sudden, when we could see the point where the house stood, he walked out the door, down the texas to the hurricane deck, right on to the stern, with me lookin' at him, speechless, an' jumped into the water. I yelled as loud as I could, an' stopped the boat in a jiffy. We got out the yawls an' hunted till daylight, but we only found his hat; seemed as though he'd gone to the bottom like a stone.

"That nearly laid me out. I'd got to look on Joe as part of myself. Seemed as though part of my life was gone. I got the few papers there was in them days to print what kind of a man Joe was, an' saved all the notices, an' offered a reward for his body, meanin' to bury it in the best style ther was, no matter what it cost. But the body never was found.

"I think it was fully a year after that that the next thing happened. I was a-comin' down one night right past the island, an' thinkin' of poor Old Joe, when all of a sudden I heard a hail from that point. Now, it's nothin' strange for people to yell at steamboats, an' I wouldn't 'a' noticed it, but there was somethin' so horrible in the voice that I stopped to listen. Then my hair rose right up all over me, an' the cold sweat run down my back, for it was Ole Joe's voice an' he was callin' me.

"I don't believe none in ghosts. I can't be fooled by that kinder talk, but I 'low I was badly rattled as I leaned out the window an' listened to that voice.

"There was only one thing to do. I must see what that voice meant, if there was a deck-load of ghosts on that island. My hand shook a good deal, I own up to it, an' fer the first time in my life I forgot my soundin's, but I got the old boat to shore somehow or other. They let the gang plank down an' waited. Perty soon somethin' crep' out of the shadders of the trees an' tottered slowly up the plank. It was thin, an' bent, an' worn,

but the minute the torchlight fell on it, I knowed it was Ole Joe.

"I took him to my room an' turned the light up. He was worn to the bone, his cheeks was hollow an' white like wax, his eyes was bloodshot an' burnin', an' his hair was gray as a badger. But it was Joe.

"I got him to bed, an' for days he lay in my bunk in a kinder stupor, I a-tendin' him every minute I could get from the wheel. Finally he got so's he could walk a little, an' then he'd come up an' sit with me an' watch the river an' talk about ole times, but never a word about where he'd been, or why he'd gone like that, or about the whole mystery. Toward the end of that season he got so's he could stand watch an' went on regular. He was still thin an' haggard, but his strength was comin' back an' he begun to look like himself. On the last trip that year Joe an' me was the only pil'ts on board. We got through to St. Paul all right an' started back. It was the first night out. My watch ended at six o'clock. We'd pass the island at 'bout half-past twelve, when I'd be on again. I was tired, an' cold, an' drowsy, and went to sleep as soon as I turned in.

"The next thing I knew the texas tender was a-poundin' on my door like mad an' yellin', 'Mr. West! Mr. West! For God's sake, wake up! There's something the matter in the pil't house.' I made two jumps an' landed at the wheel. There was no one there. The boat was a-rushin' down the middle of the river headed straight for a towhead that in three minutes more would 'a' knocked her inter toothpicks. I spun that wheel around like a buzz-saw until she was safe in the channel again. She was a mile below the island. Where was Joe? I called up the watch an' we hunted the boat. I ordered out the yawls an' we scurried the river. We laid up all night an' scoured the island. There wasn't a sign of him.

"Mindin' the way he'd given us the slip afore, I still hoped for the best, an' we went on. Three days after that his body was found at Lansing.

"I buried it on the point of the island, just below the house, an' put a big white stone over it. It's there yet."

There was a long pause, broken only by the slow tap, tap of the vessel's wheel away at the stern and the melancholy chorus in the woods. The old man sat very still, with his head between his hands, and his elbows on his knees, puffing hard at his pipe. But the pipe had gone out.

"No one ever knowed where Joe went," he went on at last, "till late that winter. I was a-sittin' in the ole Planters' House in St. Louis, one day, where I picked up an ole copy of a New York paper, an' began to read. I read there an article 'bout a strange thing that happened in a little French town in Canady called Vandrenie, near Montreal. It told how a man named Pierre Bourreau, who had been reported dead, had suddenly appeared at the house of his wife, who had married again. High words was heard comin' from that house, and then the husband and this yere man Pierre had gone off together. The next day, it said, the husband was found in a field, choked to death, with the ground all tore up round him; the woman took poison an' killed herself, an' the man Pierre was gone. From the description the article give of this man Pierre I knowed in a minute it was Ole Joe."